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THOSE CHILDREN

AND THEIR TEACHERS

A STORY OF TO-DAY

BY

BYRON A. BROOKS, A.M.

AUTHOR OF "KING SAUL," A TRAGEDY



NEW YORK

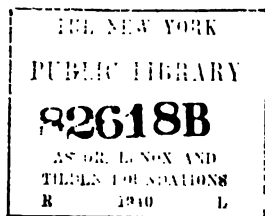
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TO THOSE CHILDREN,
OUR PAST SELVES, OUR PRESENT CARE, OUR FUTURE HOPE ;
THE LIFE, THE PIVOT OF THE WORLD,
THIS VOLUME
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY THEIR SINCERE FRIEND,
THE AUTHOR.

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THOSE CHILDREN.

CHAPTER I.

THEY ARE INTRODUCED.

THERE they come. The breakfast bell has just sounded ; there is a shout at the top of the stairs ; a sound of many voices,—from the broken bass of my first-born to the shrill treble of the little four-year-old ; a bounding of five pairs of feet down the stairs, and they burst into the dining-room.

“ Good morning, papa ; good morning, mamma,” “ Dood morin,” with a kiss from the youngest ; and all are at last seated around the table which has had to be “ extended ” several times in order to accommodate the increasing number of little guests—none more welcome.

For a moment there is a lull in the storm of voices, while the little mouths are filled, and I take the opportunity to give an inventory of my stock in olive plants.

First is Tom, our eldest, sitting at my right, an

average boy of seventeen, thoughtless, impulsive, not quick to learn, yet sound as a nut at heart, earnest and anxious to do right. He has just "graduated" at a boys' school, and is pronounced by his teacher prepared for college. Where and how to send him is the great question which has been on my mind while he has been off on his summer vacation. He is evidently thinking about it too, for he glances proudly at a glittering decoration on his breast, the class badge of his school, with the aspiring motto "Ever toward the Stars," while his thoughts dwell upon the hour when he shall blossom into a full-fledged collegian.

Opposite, next to her mother, sits our only daughter, Isabel, or Teazel as we all call her, a fair miss of fifteen, bright, proud, and coquettish, buzzing like a humming-bird from flower to flower, and darting her lively tongue into each with an incessant twitter of talk; yet full of sense and sweetness to those who know where to find it.

Next to his mother on the other side is Willie, our favorite, for he is the weakling, having had an attack in infancy which affected his nervous system, so that he has not complete control over one of his limbs, making him appear a little lame.

He is a quiet, thoughtful, large-brained, large-eyed boy of twelve, to whom life is real and earnest, yet "sicklied o'er with a pale cast of thought," which throws a glow of ideality over all he does or says. He sees, unconsciously, beneath the surface of all things. Unfortunately for him, this faculty is the constant source of painful shocks at the discovery of the shams, vanities, and falsehoods of life. But it is relieved by a gentle humor, which still more endears him to our band.

But I must cut short my inventory with a glance at boisterous, mischievous, fun-loving Bob, our ten-year-old perpetual motion machine, for there is a disturbance in his corner now; and the four-year-old, light-haired prattler, Harry, is passing his little plate with the Oliver Twistian request for more. He is the last, but by no means the least, in our list.

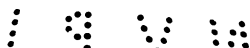
But I cannot pass over the wide gap between our two youngest without a tender thought of the flaxen-curled, sweet-smiling baby-girl which came to brighten our home, and bless our eyes for one brief summer, and then her sweet form was laid from our arms into the lowly cradle of earth, to wake again in Paradise.

"Papa, see Bob." It was Teazel's voice. "He has got something of mine."

"Yes, here it is," cried the mischievous lad, displaying a sheet of scented note-paper. "It is a note from Jack Juvenal; 'Miss Isabel Laurence,' oh, Teazer is Miss Laurence, is she?" Bob calls her Teazer when he wishes to annoy her, which is most of the time. "'Can I have the pleasure,'" he continued, reading the missive. But impatient Teazel could endure no more, and attempted to seize the note. Bob resisted, and trouble was imminent when I was obliged to command Robert to give it up to her. When I call him Robert, he knows that I am in earnest; so with his politest bow he returned the note to his sorely ruffled sister, and was dismissed from the table. This ebullition was perhaps pardonable from the fact that the children had just returned from their summer vacation in the country and had some of the freedom of the fields and forests still clinging to them.

"Ah! what shall we do with these children?" sighed their mother. "I shall be glad when they are in school again."

"I don't want to go to school, I hate school," exclaimed Bob, who was now making a fly-wheel of



himself on the piano stool, lying flat and revolving at the rate of a hundred revolutions a minute. "If it was n't for schools and policemen what good times we could have. Here I must go to school and be shut up and ordered around by teachers, and when I come home and want to fly my kite or ride my velocipede, the policeman makes me stop. There is no room for boys anywhere. What is the use of schools, anyhow?"

"Well, Bob," I replied, thinking to shame him a little, "I don't see much use of schools myself for such boys as you. Here I have sent you to school for five years, paid the bills, and good ones too, and what is the result? You knew how to read when you began, and can read but little better now, as far as understanding what you read. You have learned a little geography,—out of books,—a few rules of arithmetic, a few definitions of words—in others more unintelligible,—nothing definite, nothing practical. You can't solve a simple calculation in arithmetic, or write a fairly correct letter. Something must be wrong, either with you or your teachers."

"But, papa," replied Bob, "I do as well as the other boys; my reports are all good, and in some things I am first."

I knew this was true, and so could not throw all the blame on Bob.

"I think, mother, we must send the boys to a different school,—but where shall we send them?"

"I agree with you," she replied. "I am much disappointed in the boys' studies. Bobby is always discontented and unhappy in school. He learns his lessons only under pressure at school, or with my help at home. Indeed, I think I ought to have the teacher's salary, for I do most of the work. The teacher only hears the lessons which he has assigned, and often only glances at the copybooks to see if the work is done, and to give them their marks. The parents do the teaching. As to Willie, I dread to send him to school again. He is now quite rugged from his summer in the open air, but the confinement and competitions of school will bring him down again. Besides, I doubt if school does him much good. He has learned much more from his home reading and society than at school. Children learn more from their companions than from their teachers. Ours learned more this summer, in the country, than in all the previous year at school. But now they must go somewhere. Where shall we send them?"

"That is the question," was all I could say. I felt the truth of what my wife said, but was equally at a loss how to answer it. We had sent them from one school to another, all well recommended and expensive. But the results had been very disappointing. I did not see my way then, and thought best not to discuss the subject further before the children.

Meantime breakfast was ended. Bob had gone out with his velocipede to try conclusions with the policeman. Willie was stretched out on the sofa with a book. Teazel was preparing to call on some of her acquaintances who had returned to the city, and Tom was brushing up his algebra and Virgil preparatory to the dread ordeal of examination for college.

"Well, Toodles," said I to little Harry as I was putting on my hat to go down town, "what shall I bring you home to-night?"

"Dirt," replied the little savage.

His visit to the country had given him a taste of the pleasures of unlimited dirt. I could but think as I walked down to my business, that it was a touch of nature, that the closer we are to mother earth, the nearer we are to Nature's heart. The instincts

of children are true, and parents would be wise to follow them.

All day my mind was filled with the ever-recurring question, what shall we do with those children? I was anxious to do the very best for them which I could do in order to fit them for the battle of life, not only in those outward acquirements and accomplishments which form so small a part of the necessary accoutrement, but in that discipline of mind and strength of principle which should prepare them for the shocks which must surely come. I could give them but little of worldly wealth, but I was willing to make any sacrifice in order to give them the best intellectual and moral equipment.

As to Tom, I needed him greatly in my business. Yet, I knew that for any practical assistance he was as unserviceable as an infant. The youngest boy in my employment was of more use than Tom was or could be for some time, yet I had expended thousands upon his education, such as it was. He had just graduated from Dr. Humbug's Collegiate Institute, with great *eclat* and sound of brass, by aid of one of the said "Doctor's" ancient orations, repeated for the twentieth time, as the orig-

inal production of the student. The sham was transparent, but the effect upon the pupils may be imagined. Tom was now pronounced "fitted for college"; but, like the poet, he was *non fit* for any thing else. Still I knew that in the competitions of modern business life, only the best-disciplined intellects survive; that, more and more, education is becoming a necessity to the business man.

While in this quandary, I chanced to meet my old friend Damon, of Damon, Pithias, & Co., ship-chandlers on South Street, and knowing that he had several children I inquired what he was going to do with them this season. "Do with my children?" exclaimed my usually mild-mannered friend, in a very emphatic manner. "I am determined to take them out of school entirely. I tell you, Mr. Laurence, our schools are a cram and a sham. I have spent a fortune upon my children's schooling, and they have learned nothing but conceit, deceit, and impudence. I had intended to send Sam to college, but he thinks he knows every thing now, and I shall put him right into business where he will have an opportunity to take his own measure and learn something practical. The two other boys

I have left on the farm with their uncle, where they will learn how to work, and acquire strength of body and get a wholesome taste of real life, if they learn nothing more. The girls will remain at home with their mother, where they can be of some use, and we can oversee their associates and their reading, and keep them from acquiring positive evil. In the schools they receive only an imitation of learning, sandwiched between silly gossip and pernicious reading. The minds of my children were open, eager, and honest, before they were sent to school. Now they are closed, dull, and deceptive. Nothing interests them—no fact of importance or topic connected with their studies. The life of the world is a blank behind them and before them. They care only for the trivialities of the present. Nothing less than an earthquake can arouse them. But I mean to give mine a shaking up."

"Surely," I interposed, in surprise, "you do not attribute all this to the schools."

"Mainly, sir, mainly," he replied, with emphasis. "Children's minds are naturally open and eager to learn, in the natural way, by the exercise of the senses upon natural objects. Now how is a child treated in school? Shut up and shut out from the

world in which he is to live, he is placed on a bench, and a book is put into his hand. Words, words, barren words! He is fed upon husks until all natural appetite is destroyed. Then, crammed, like a goose, until he can hold no more, he is pronounced educated. Were it not for the natural elasticity of youth, and the fact that ninety-nine hundredths of the so-called learning is as speedily forgotten, the children would die. The best of them do die."

I confess I was somewhat shocked by this view of the case, but I ventured to remark: "I did not suppose the case was as bad as that. Perhaps, Mr. Damon, you have not done your part as you should. You have have not watched your children closely enough."

"I acknowledge it," he replied, "but I am determined now to make amends. I don't know what to do with the children, but I am determined to take them out of school until I can decide what is best. No education is better than bad education. Our schools, sir, are a fraud and a delusion. That's what they are—good-day."

And my energetic friend hurried down the street in a manner that showed he was terribly in earnest. For what comes closer to a man's business and

bosom, than the interests of his children? Here was food for thought as I returned to my business; but I did not give up my long-cherished plan of sending Tom to college.

CHAPTER II.

THEY SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.

WHEN I arrived home at the close of the day, I found an unusual commotion in my usually quiet domicile. Bob, in his excursions about the street, on his velocipede, had at last encountered the obnoxious policeman, who is always present when he is not wanted, and invisible when he is, and was ordered off from the sidewalk. Bob exhausted his eloquence in vain in an attempt to soften the heart of the brass-buttoned exponent of the law, and at last despairing of making an impression upon that organ of the great man's constitution, he decided to defy the law, and suddenly started off at full speed down the street pursued by the burly officer. At first the race was apparently not to the strong, for Bob's light steed was more than a match for the corpulent pursuer, who soon began to puff and blow, while Bob glanced at him over his shoulder with an expression of triumphant mischief most amusing to the spectators.

The disgusted guardian of the city was about to abandon the chase, when Bob, in attempting to cross the street, came in collision with a horse and carriage. There was a crash, a scream, and Bob with his demolished vehicle lay under the feet of the horse, which was with difficulty restrained from running away, and adding another to the accidents of the day. The pursuing policeman came up just in time to take the unconscious boy, who was bleeding from a wound on the head, and to carry him home, where they arrived accompanied by a long procession of street urchins, a short time previous to my return. The first shock to his mother and the family had passed, and I met the surgeon just coming out of the room. "How is my boy?" I could only whisper.

"All right," was the reply. "It is only a scalp wound, though a large one; I have sewed it up, and he will be about again in a few days. He is not a nervous child."

"No, thank Providence for that," I replied. "There is one compensation in these boisterous boys: they can endure seemingly any amount of injury without serious results."

"Well, Bob," I said, as I saw the now revived

but pale-faced boy lying with his head enveloped in bandages, and one of his eyes temporarily closed, "how do you feel?"

"I feel as if the top of my head was taken off," replied the lad. "I got ahead of that policeman anyhow; but where is my velocipede? is that broken?"

"Somewhat shattered," I replied; "your horse won't run away again very soon."

"Oh, my velocipede! what shall I do? I can't have any fun now," and for the first time tears stood in his eyes. "But, papa," he soon exclaimed, a smile appearing through his tears, "you ought to have seen that big policeman try to run. It made him puff like an old steam-engine.* Would n't he be a good one to catch a thief?"

"But he brought you home," I replied.

"Did he!" exclaimed Bob with a softened look. "He's a trump after all, is n't he? I'll give him an apple next time I see him."

Later, when we were discussing the accident at dinner, little Harry put in his word. "Papa, I've been run over too."

"You, Toodles, how were you run over?"

"By the elevated railroad," replied the little quibbler.

"Ah, my child," I could only reply, "you will be President some day."

"I 'm president now," cried Bob from an adjoining room.

"President of what?"

"Of the Orphean Base-ball Club."

"So am I," added Willie. "I am president of the Olympic Entomological Society (Limited)."

"How many does your long-named society number?" I ventured to ask.

"Two: Jim Jones and me. He is secretary, and I am president. He catches the butterflies and I stick them."

"Ah!" said I, "I think I know of the firm of Catchem and Stickem. I know several such societies which have quite an extensive collection of insects known as humbugs. But your society has a more genuine existence than some of them. And you, Teazel, are you president too?"

"Oh, yes, papa, I am president of the Parthenon."

"And what is that, pray?"

"I do not know what the Parthenon is, papa, but I'm president of it. All the girls belong. It is a secret society, but no one knows what the secret is."

"If they did I presume it would not be a secret long," I ventured to remark.

"You naughty papa! Anyhow, we are all officers, and have grips and passwords and strange signals, and whisperings and mysterious glances and wise looks to the girl that don't belong, and we have initials and monograms and badges. We never have any meetings, and no one knows what it is all about. But it's awfully nice, perfectly splendid, immense!"

"Are those some of your passwords? They are rather too 'awful,' are they not?" I remarked.

"Now, Tom, what are you president of?"

"I am president of the Calithumpian Society," he replied.

"The what? Is that an imaginary society too?"

"Not by any means," replied he. "You would not think so if you could hear us at one of our meetings. It is a rule that no one shall sit more than two minutes without making a noise, and he who makes the most noise is elected president. He calls the society to order by pounding with his mallet. Then they all begin to make noise, and if they drown him out, he is deposed; but if he makes the most noise he retains the chair."

"And you are president? I'm surprised," I exclaimed, looking at my usually quiet son.

"Yes," replied Tom, "when I feel that I cannot hold in any longer, I go over to the society and let off some surplus energy."

"Now, that is a useful society," remarked mother. "Its originator is a public benefactor. There ought to be one in every family. I think I shall organize a society for promotion of the Calithumpian order."

"Then you will be president of that, won't you?" archly suggested Willie.

"Oh, yes; I am president now of I don't know how many boards, associations, and clubs."

"This is an age of societies," I remarked. "If any one wants to do any thing whatever, instead of doing it, he organizes a society. If he wants to give a dollar for charity he gives it to a society which takes ninety-nine cents to spend the remainder. Nothing is done individually, and so most of the good is lost both to the giver and receiver. People seem to think that human beings are made like buttons or screws, wholesale, and are to be treated in that way. But where will you find minds more diverse than in the same family—in this, for instance? Each requires distinct treatment, and

has peculiar traits and tendencies which must be guided or restrained according to the individual case. Children very early begin to show their tastes, and discover their hobbies. Every man has his hobby. A man without a hobby is like a ship without ballast. You have your peculiarities as marked as those of men."

"What is mine? What is mine?" they all began to cry at once.

"To begin, then," I replied, "with Tom: What were you doing after your lessons to-day?"

"I went down to a printing-office to see how stereotypes are made, and came home and printed some cards on my small press," replied he.

"It's easy enough to see what your hobby is," I remarked, "and it's not a bad one either."

"And Teazel, can you stick to one thing long enough to have a hobby?"

"Oh, yes, papa," replied my daughter, with a laugh. "This morning I called upon Lucretia Smith. She had just returned from Mount Pisgah, and they had a splendid time! They boarded with such a queer man, Jedediah Samson. And her cousin, Cicero Nobbs, called. He is *such* a distinguished-looking fellow. He has just returned from Paris—Pare, he

says. It is too funny for any thing. And as I went down the street I saw the prettiest plaque in the window. Lucretia is working a new tidy, such a beautiful pattern, and she is going to lend it to me."

"That will do," I interrupted. "I think I can discover your hobby. It is fancy work and decoration."

"Oh yes," said mamma, "she has decorated a ginger jar with the maddest medley of figures ever seen, turtles on their heads and fishes on their backs. Her room is filled with old plates and teapots, and the walls are covered with Japanese plaques—made in Connecticut—and adorned with dragons, monsters, and chimeras dire enough to give one the nightmare. The other day she appeared in the kitchen, and wanted to decorate Andromeda's wash-tub. I offered to let her decorate it awhile with her white arms, but that was a kind of decoration of which she knew nothing and cared less. Her latest mania is for collecting old shingles, and the other day she visited an old windmill and brought home some of the corn in the hopper as a relic. The house is full of the beginnings of her art works, and my bureaus are burdened with her unfinished tidies and worsted work."

"Evidently," I remarked, "her art instincts need cultivation, and also the habits of order and perseverance. But as to the tidies, let them stay. If any thing is especially designed to embitter man's pilgrimage here below, it is tidies. What can be more forbidding than for one to enter a room with every chair and resting-place occupied with one of these ornamental placards, saying, 'keep off the chair?' They are like those in the park which say, 'keep off the grass.' I have always managed to 'keep the grass off' from me, but I can't do so with the tidies. Every time I enter a certain friend's room, I leave decorated as to my back like a dead wall with those emblems of tidiness which I can't 'keep off,' if I venture to sit down. Still, Isabel, you might have a worse hobby than decoration and collection. It is only the tidy instinct of our grandmothers grown to seed."

"Now, Willie," I continued, turning to our quiet member, "have you any other hobby than that of the Entomological Society (Limited)?"

"Yes, papa, I would like to be a soldier."

"What, you, our delicate pet!" I exclaimed, in surprise.

"Yes, papa," said Teazel, "you ought to hear

the stories Willie tells at night of wars, Indians, giants, and hobgoblins; enough to make your blood run cold. And he makes them up, out of his own head too. And when he has us all shivering in terror, he quietly says, 'no it is n't so,' and goes quickly to sleep, while we lie awake in fear and trembling, expecting every moment to see some of his dreadful creatures."

"I think I see Willie's talent," I interposed. "He has the martial instinct, though in an unwarlike body. But if he can't fight, as probably he would not if he could, he can tell of wars and stir up others to fight. Like blind Homer, he can take greater pleasure in narrating or inventing the deeds of heroes, than in performing them. The instinct is the same. Many a marvellous achievement is wrought out on the silent plains of an apparently peaceful mind, and many an undiscovered hero walks our streets, unknown."

"Who knows but our little Willie may be one of them," said his mother, as a proud smile rested upon his fair young brow.

"Now, Bobby, what is your hobby?" I called, but only a muffled sound was heard from his room.

"*His forte* seems to be sleep," responded his

mother, "when he is not in mischief. He is an angel when he is asleep. What a blessed ally to mothers is nature's gentle soother!"

"And what is your chief taste, Toodles?" I continued, addressing the youngest.

"More pudding," was the reply.

"Aha! I see, you have a genius for eating. Eating and sleeping. Let us be thankful that we all can excel in something, and that talent in these directions is not confined to the aristocracy."

After dinner, when the children had demonstrated their eating capacity, and had retired, and were exercising their sleeping talents, Mrs. Laurence returned to the old question: "What shall we do with those children?"

"I am more at a loss than ever," I replied; and I recounted my interview with Mr. Damon.

"But we can't adopt his course," said my wife, "even if assured that it is the best, which I am not. But I have a story to relate. We are not alone in our troubles. Our old friend Mrs. Norton was in this afternoon, and related her experiences. You know they sent their boys—they are about the same ages as Bob and Willie—to the Polyglott Institute. You remember we wished to do so, but

were deterred by the expense. It is called the Polyglott Institute because they claim to teach all the languages. Mrs. Norton says every tongue is spoken there but English. One of the rules is, 'speak French or be silent,' and a fine is imposed for its violation. If the fine were for using bad English it would soon bankrupt the institution. 'My boys,' said Mrs. Norton, 'can not speak as well as when they entered. But every thing is conducted on a grand scale. The proprietor or director as he calls himself, says he is not a teacher, but a merchant. He has education to sell, wholesale and retail. We send our little pitchers to him to be filled; and the pouring in is thoroughly done, only they don't seem to be successful in trying to put a gallon into a quart mug. Every thing is run by machinery from the engines in the basement, to the clock on the tower. The whole establishment is most elegant and complete in all its appointments. Education by machinery is carried on there to its extreme attainment. Still, the results don't seem to be satisfactory. The stuffed child can do almost every thing but think. That, he does not learn at such schools. All individuality is ignored and finally extinguished. When

he comes out, he is as much out of place as the circus horse turned out to pasture. He can go through all the tricks, as they were taught him; but he can't do any thing else. His real education has to be begun after leaving school.' Finally, Mrs. Norton said, she was determined to take her boys out and go to the other extreme, and send them to the public school. At all events they would learn something there if not so many things. In the thorough drill in elementary branches, and its rough competitions, they would learn to do some thinking and to exercise some individuality. Mrs. Norton urged me to let our boys go with hers. She feared the companionship there, but if we would send ours she would not hesitate."

I confess I was somewhat surprised by this suggestion. To speak frankly, I knew nothing about our public schools. Like all good Americans, I gloried in our free schools, cheerfully paid my taxes, and felt that the country was safe. But as to going into one of them or knowing what was done there, or how managed, I was as ignorant as the average American citizen. But I felt that we had at last arrived at Hobson's choice—that or nothing,—and I inclined to the suggestion as a final

experiment. So it was decided to send the boys to the public school. Thus we experiment with our most precious possessions—our children ; meantime they are growing from under our hand, changing, forming by causes beyond our control, and we awake when too late to find our experiments ended, their characters fixed, like the clay unfinished in the hands of the moulder, stamped for good or ill forever.

CHAPTER III.

A NEW ACQUAINTANCE.

THE next Monday Willie and Bob were duly despatched to the public school.

They made no objection, for it was a change of scene to them, and many of their acquaintances were met there, for many parents were in my position.

When I next met my friend Damon, I informed him of what I had done.

"You will see enough of our glorious free schools before the year is over," said he. "But they cannot be worse than some of the so-called institutions of learning which abound in our midst. Schools of lying would be a more appropriate name, for that is what they are. It may seem harsh to say it, but it is a fact. Not only are they pretentious and shallow, false in their aims and claims, but they actually develop deception and falsehood. I will give you an illustration. My boy Dick I sent to Professor Perseus' Classical Academy. Anybody is a pro-

fessor, you know, in this country, who pretends to teach any thing, from the professor of prestidigitiation and horse-taming to Sanscrit and psychology. Professor Perseus, like many other professors of medicine, law, philosophy, and divinity, doctored on the mutual admiration plan, was a self-dubbed knight of the ferule. He said he was engaged in the instruction business; his being the only profession, so-called, in which any person whatever can engage without training or license.

“One of the customs in that school was that every pupil should bring into the class his lesson written in a copybook. Then each pupil was asked whether his work was done correctly, and marked according to his report. More lessons were then given out, and the result marked as before; this marking and assigning the lessons, and prescribing the penalties, being the chief function of the teacher. This, then, was a constant temptation to the pupils to copy their work from each other, or have it done for them at home, and to dissemble. Thus, it came to be considered no wrong among the pupils to deceive the teachers or even to tell them falsehoods. Boys entering such a school with truthful instincts and habits, soon imbibe the infection and learn to lie.

This they confess themselves. Once a prize examination was held, and a boy who sat next to Dick copied from his paper. When the papers were examined, this boy received the prize, although it was found that Dick was next. The winner had excelled though copying from him. The boy when questioned declared the work to be his own. Dick knew this to be false, and so did the other boys. But the feeling among them was strongly against telling of each other, though not against copying and lying.

"Thus the matter was left, and a premium placed upon deception and falsehood. But Dick declares that he will not try to be honest and truthful any longer, for it does not pay. The whole sentiment of the school is against it. It requires more than ordinary strength of principle for an ambitious boy to bear up against this constant current and strain of temptation. Hence, I felt compelled to take him out of the school, but I fear that his moral sense is forever blunted. That is one year's sad experience at Professor Perseus' Classical Academy. Can you wonder that I am disgusted and disheartened?"

I was obliged to confess that I was surprised and

shocked, for if there is one virtue which I endeavor to teach my children, it is truthfulness. To have the labor of years fatally undermined by one of these schools for lying was indeed a serious evil, and not to be endured.

I returned home still more perplexed and troubled as to what was best to do with those children.

On my return I was met at the door by the children all crying at once :

“ Who do you think has come ? ”

“ Uncle Ag., Uncle Ag.,” they all cried in answer to their own question, without giving me time to think.

This was indeed an arrival.

Agamemnon King, or Uncle Ag., as he was called by the children, was Mrs. Laurence's only brother, a confirmed bachelor of about thirty-five, and a great favorite with the children. He had been somewhat of a rolling stone or flying Dutchman, having no mate to overrule his whims, nor little anchors to hold him to his moorings. He had the free and fresh air of the sea about him, with the easy manners of a man of the world, and an unconventional method of thought and expression, combined with a keen insight into men and things, and an ap-

preciation of the practical side of things which made him an entertaining and agreeable companion. But especially was he the favorite of the children, whose pranks he enjoyed and often returned with interest, and whom he delighted with his narratives of travel and tales of adventure, surpassing the boldest deeds of Gulliver or Munchausen.

"Here he is," shouted Bob, as I entered the sitting-room. There he was, indeed, surrounded, captured, and confiscated.

Harry was astride of his shoulders, with his fingers clutched in his hair, taking a ride on the camel's hump, he said, as Uncle Ag. had done in Egypt.

Willie was sitting on one knee calling for more stories about tiger-hunting in India.

Bob was standing on the other trying to walk the rope across Niagara, as Uncle Ag. had seen Blondin do.

Teazel sat at his feet trying to fit to them a pair of slippers of her needle-work, fearfully and wonderfully made, which he said resembled the moccasins he had received on his visit to Standing Bear, from his daughter, Tiger Lily.

Tom was teasing him for the Australian boome-

rang which he had promised to bring him, and mamma was looking on, in a kind of dazed fondness, trying to release her brother from his unmerciful captors, and to say a word for herself as to a long-promised Persian rug.

"Here you are, indeed," I exclaimed, "and likely to stay awhile, before you get away from those children. But I advise them not to kill their captive the first day, or they may lose some of the good things which they are likely to get out of him——"

"Like the woman who killed the specie-depositing goose," cheerily responded Agamemnon. "But when I am killed, I hope there will be some good left in me. Let the youngsters climb; it's fun for them, if it is death to the frog. I can stand it if they can. I'm fond of children. A broiled boy, fat and tender, served up hot with brain sauce, is a most toothsome dish, I can assure you, as I have eaten many in the Cannibal Islands."

A cry of horror went up from the group as they fled from the boy-eater, and Uncle Ag. was released for a moment.

"Oh, yes, I am fond of children," he continued,—
"other people's children. That is where we bache-

lors have the advantage ; we have all the pleasure, and you have all the trouble. You fathers and mothers have all the care and expense of rearing them from infancy, taking them through the whooping-cough, measles, and scarlet-fever, and later you watch, with fear and trembling, the boys through the gunpowder period, the boating fever, and baseball mania, and the girls through the skipping-rope craze, the croquet infection, and flirtation spasms, all for the benefit of us bachelors who can dandle them, play with them, flirt with them, and drop them when we are tired of them."

"But these, you know," I replied, "are our jewels, our investment in personal property, so to speak. Each new production is said to be worth five thousand dollars, and it certainly costs five thousand more to raise and educate him. So you see I have a snug little fortune in olive plants now. If they prove to be a good crop, it will pay ten per cent. per annum."

"But you don't count the care and trouble, sleepless nights and anxious days," said he.

"I think I do," I replied. "What do bachelors know about that? There's Willie; I believe I have travelled around the world more times than

you have, with him in my arms, up and down the room."

"At one time we tried trundling him in the baby carriage, but it annoyed an old bachelor who had rooms beneath us, until we and the baby carriage were brought into court, although we used every precaution to prevent noise. There's the milk of human kindness for you in the bachelor breast, soured and turned to acid."

"Do you know that every bachelor is in love, deeply, devotedly in love?" said my wife.

"No, indeed; I'm sure I'm not. With whom, pray?" said Ag.

"In love with himself, and he adores his lover. For love pure and perfect, that never wanes or changes, commend me to an old bachelor."

"I plead guilty to the soft impeachment," answered Agamemnon. "But I am not an old bachelor, you know, and never expect to be; you can testify, Minerva, that I am only twenty-five."

"Yes, and have been for the past ten years," she replied.

"I admit that I love myself best," he continued, "and for good reason; I have never yet met any one so worthy of my confidence. I know this old

boy pretty well, all his tricks and artifices, and do not fear now that he will betray me into any serious indiscretions; least of all into falling in love with a little piece of pink and white humanity, jewelled, frizzled, and furbelowed, and called a woman."

"That is too deep a subject," interrupted my wife; "now let us go down to dinner, but I fear I cannot offer you your favorite roast to-day."

Bob said he was not hungry, and was inclined to remain; but little Harry's appetite overcame his fears, and he resumed his place on Uncle Ag.'s shoulders.

"Now you are riding on the elevated road," said he.

"No," answered Harry, "I 'm riding on the dummy."

"Oh, Uncle Ag.," exclaimed Willie, at the first pause in the dinner, "you ought to see our new teacher; she is perfectly splendid. We go to the public school now. The teacher in our department is a new one. She has light brown, curling hair, large, dark brown eyes, and looks very pale; but in the afternoon when she is tired, I guess, there are two bright red spots in her cheeks. She is so pleasant and speaks so soft I just love her; she 's splen-

did. Her father has lately died, and she has been ill, so Jim Norton said. But I don't believe she 'll stay long ; the boys are so rude. To-day one of the big boys fired off a popgun and hit her on the head."

"She turned quick and looked so pale and trembled so, I was afraid she would faint ; she asked who did it, but they all denied it. Then she looked more pained than before, and said she felt more hurt to think any of them would lie, than by the act ; and she asked if the boy who did it would not stay after school ; she wanted to speak with him and would not have him punished ; but no one stayed. She is good, anyhow."

"Has this being wings?" asked Uncle Ag.

"No," answered Willie, in surprise, "why do you ask?"

"Oh, I thought she might be an angel, by your description. In all my travels I have never seen one, and should be very glad and somewhat surprised to find one here in this city."

"I will ask her," said Willie quite seriously.

"But men don't marry angels," remarked my wife.

"They all think they do ; that is, those who marry," replied Agamemnon, "but they are soon disillusioned."

"What miserable companions men would make, if their wives were angels," she replied. "But a woman would need angelic excellence to endure most men."

"Ag., do you think you are fit to marry any woman?"

"Yes, why not?" he replied. "There 's Willie's angel, for instance. He 's in love with her, so I could not marry her. But if I could, I should give her a good home with plenty of money and liberty to do as she pleased, which is what most women want, above every thing. They marry for a home, with the man as a necessary encumbrance. I don't doubt now that Willie's teacher, if married, would develop into a fashionable woman of society, as vain and heartless as the others. She would keep up the establishment, and fulfil her part of the bargain and I mine; she would keep her promises and I would do the same. But it is a commercial transaction on both sides, and I purpose to keep out of it."

"Unless you should meet Willie's angel without wings," suggested my wife.

"I don't know but she has wings," Willie insisted. "I am going to find out anyway."

Here the conversation was changed. But the

little pitchers had taken it all in, to be given out again at a future time and with most unexpected consequences to all parties.

"I am in trouble again," remarked my wife, "on the servant question. Andromeda has given me warning. I asked her where she was going, but she looked mysterious and said she was not going to be anybody's servant any longer. Going to be married, then?" said I. 'No mam,' she replied, but she would not say what she was going to do. There is nothing for her class to do that I know of, but to go out to service, or to get married."

"Or to teach school," interrupted Ag. "That seems to be the happy means invented for impecunious females to bridge over the awful gulf between a father and a husband."

"As to the servant question, I see but one solution," said I—"Automatons. A friend of mine, a printer, declared that he would have compositors that would not strike; so he invented a type-setting machine. An automatic servant is not more difficult to make."

"Why not have automatic teachers too?" said Ag. "When wound up and set going they could go through the motions as well as many of them."

After dinner Ag. said to Tom : " So you are going to college ; what are you going for ? "

" To get an education, I suppose," replied Tom.

" What is a college education good for ? " pursued Ag.

" Why, to help one occupy a better position in the world, I suppose. Everybody says I must have an education," replied the somewhat perplexed boy.

" An education, yes, but what kind of an education ? " continued his questioner. " A blacksmith's education, a mechanic's, a farmer's, would help you to get a living, but a college education would not in itself increase your chances of getting on in the world. It would rather diminish them. I know a college graduate and lawyer, who is glad to serve as book-keeper to a skilful young machinist."

" Then you regard the chief end of education to enable one to get a living ? " I remarked.

" Oh, no," he replied. " Education is the drawing out and developing of every power of which the human being is possessed, or, as Kant says, is to develop in the individual all the perfection of which he is capable. I have a friend that mourns over his

dog, that by reason of his neglected education he remains so untrained, when he could be taught to mind at a word or wink. But how many children, not to say men and women, are as undeveloped as this puppy of a year old: I saw recently an educated pig that was worth three hundred dollars, when the ordinary porker was scarcely worth three dollars. If education can do so much for a pig, or a dog, what ought it to do for the human animal? O yes, Tom, go to college by all means, but don't depend upon its studies or professors for education. Study, read, mingle with your fellows, talk, discuss, write, ride a hobby, have some subject of independent research in the fields or laboratory, and college will do you good. It is the world that educates us, and college is a cosmos in itself. It is a true democracy, and one of special advantage for training the mind, as it is not distracted with the main business of the great world—getting a living."

"But why do you say not depend upon the professors?" asked Tom.

"Because all education is self-education. Teachers are only guides to point out the way; or serve as awful examples of learning gone to waste, as some of them do. As a well-known writer says: 'The

college professor, as a rule, teaches within the walls what he has learned, and shows no fructification of thought and life in production. He gets into his rut, which, with the passing years, grows deeper and deeper, until at last his head sinks below the surface and he loses sight of the world, and the world of him.'

"Socrates was the true teacher. He was followed and beloved by the young because he awakened their minds by his kindly, yet caustic questions: for what is greater pleasure than the conception of thought? But this is not the method of the colleges. Every thing that will not go through the hopper is thrown away, no matter what personal powers and aspirations may go with it.

"There was a case in my college, though an extreme one, perhaps. Poor Browning! he was a great favorite with every one but the faculty; he could not recite well. But it was a pleasure to be in his room with a few friends and hear him talk. The wit and wisdom, the quaint and original thoughts and expressions, the eloquent orations and pathetic poems that he would deliver, were truly wonderful. He was an omnivorous reader and an acute observer of nature and men. He could not take

any thing for granted, but must investigate and think it out for himself. Hence he was a poor reciter and repeater of others' thoughts. He held marks in utter contempt. The result was that he fell behind his class. At the same time his extreme sensitiveness was deeply wounded ; his spirits failed, and this affected his health. At the end of Sophomore year, he failed to 'pass up' ; he hoped to do so before beginning of studies in the fall. But his mind brooded over his apparent disgrace ; he could not apply himself to study ; his health began to fail, and at the second examination he failed again. But nothing remarkable was noticed about his demeanor, until one night, the awe-struck whisper ran through the college, 'Browning has shot himself.' I saw him stretched on the sofa in his room, the pistol fallen from his nerveless hand—the bullet in his temple. The clotted brown locks were cast in disorder over his pale, broad forehead—a vision I shall never forget. That is one of the results of college cramming and the marking system."

"Well, Tom, do you think you can stand the pressure?" I inquired.

"I am willing to try, if you think best," he answered, like the dutiful son that he was.

"Then go," I said. "But remember—no trifling. I cannot afford to spend the money, nor you the time, to devote four years to luxurious idleness under the name of study, as many do. Be guided by your uncle's advice and you won't go far wrong. You will escape most of the evil, and acquire some good habits, if you don't learn much. Off to college, then, but don't forget to let me know every thing you do. I am your father, and probably know more than you do, though you won't think so after you have been there six months."

So Tom started for college: but he forgot most of what had been said to him before he arrived there. What is told us does no good. Every fool must learn from the same stern old teacher—Madame Experience. Happy those who, having felt her heavy hand, learn not to transgress again her mandates!

CHAPTER IV.

SOME DISCOVERIES.

SEVERAL days passed without hearing anything from the boys in the public school, until one day Willie electrified us by announcing that his teacher had wings.

"How do you know?" asked Uncle Ag.

"Because she said so," declared the boy, "and if she says so, it's so, if it is n't so," he continued, in his illogical faith ready to do battle for his lady at the first challenge.

"You must give us an opportunity to see this veritable angel come down to instruct the young idea," said Uncle Ag. "How did she come to tell you that she had wings?"

It seems that Willie had watched his opportunity to ask the momentous question, so one afternoon, when the other scholars had gone, he remained, and diffidently approaching the fair young teacher, who sat at her desk with a sad, far-away look in her eyes, as if her thoughts were far from the prisoning school-room, he asked :

"Please, Miss Diana, have you got wings?"

The startled young lady turned quickly and gazed at the boy a moment as if striving to recall herself to her surroundings; then said softly, yet sadly, "why do you ask such a question?"

"Because I love you," exclaimed the impulsive child, affected by her apparent sorrow, and throwing his arms about her neck.

"Does any one love me?" cried she; and clasping him in her arms convulsively, she wept as if the hidden fountains of grief were at last unsealed; while at the same time her heart felt the healing influence of the first touch of true sympathy. "You cannot know," she said to the somewhat astonished boy, "how precious to me it is to find in this heartless place, amid these rude children and these deadening exercises, one, though a child, who loves me and seems to appreciate my kindness. I love you, I love all these children; my heart yearns over their poor, neglected, chilled, and corrupted natures, and desires to make them better and supply some of the wants of their barren, heartless homes. But thus far, my advances have met with only indifference and despite. You are the only one that seems to have a heart which has not been already frozen by neglect and cruelty."

"But why did you ask me if I had wings?"

"Because Uncle Ag. wanted to know."

"And who is Uncle Ag.?"

"Don't you know my Uncle Ag.? Agamemnon King is his name. He is the bravest man in the world He's been everywhere, and fought Indians, and tigers, and giants, and sometimes he eats little boys."

"I don't think I would like to meet this ogre, if that is what he does; he might want to eat me," said the amused lady.

"Oh, no, he won't," said Willie. "You're so good and beautiful. I told him all about you, and he said you must be an angel; and he wanted to know if you had wings, and you have, have n't you?"

"Yes, my dear," replied the now earnest teacher; "I think I could fly if I had such wings as you are, to lift me above this sordid life, and let me breathe again the inspiring air of sympathy and love."

Thus Willie discovered that his teacher was an angel.

There was no levity now in Agamemnon's tones as he said: "It must indeed be a bitter life for a lady of refinement and sensibility to be condemned to this tread-mill sort of existence."

"She has apparently some other and deeper sorrow," continued my wife. "Here is an opportunity, Ag., for you to exercise your chivalrous disposition by delivering this imprisoned maiden from the devouring dragon."

"Yes," he replied, "if there were any way but by marrying her. In the age of chivalry the knight-errant could deliver the enchanted damsel without being expected to marry her. But in this unromantic age, if a man attempts to befriend a woman, he must either be prepared to marry her, or be accused of being a worse demon than that from which he rescues her. I shall hesitate before I place myself in that predicament."

"You would n't eat her up, would you, Uncle Ag.?" asked Willie.

"Not unless she was very sweet, you know," was the reply.

"Oh, mamma," broke in Bob at this point, "what do you think I saw to-day?—a new teacher in the primary department. It was our Andromeda! And she was dressed up so fine and put on so many airs you would have thought she was a lady of the first water—a regular stunner."

"What, Bob!" I exclaimed, "you surely must be

mistaken. The girl could scarcely read or write, and how could she get a position as teacher? Impossible!"

"It may be impossible, but it's true," persisted Bob, who was now corroborated by Willie.

"And she recognized you?" I asked.

"No, indeed," replied Willie. "She held her head so high that she did not see us, but Bob ran and stood right in front of her, and looked up to see if she would know him; but she only said, 'Run away, you impertinent rascal.'"

"Can such things be? I cannot believe it," said I, with much indignation. "How could this have come about? I am astonished."

"I think," replied my wife, "that I see an explanation. You know she had a brother Dennis who came to see her often, and whom she spoke of as being employed about the City Hall and as somewhat of a politician. I have heard her speak of his friend, the school trustee, and doubtless in that way she has secured an appointment as teacher."

"But how could she get a certificate?" I asked. "You do not mean to say that even our schools have been invaded by politics, and that low politicians can influence the selection of teachers for our children?"

A light had broken in upon my mind, revealing as by a lightning glare the length and breadth of my ignorance of our public-school system. I resolved at once to investigate the matter, which I did, with the result that I speedily acquired some startling information. I determined to call upon the trustee who had appointed our servant-girl, and, not doubting that he was a gentleman of intelligence, to inform him of his mistake. I was somewhat surprised, when ushered into the presence of the dignitary, to find that he was my butcher; still I did not know that he was not a gentleman until I entered into conversation with him as to the appointment of my servant-girl as a teacher and assured him of her unfitness.

"You need not come here to teach me my business," he growled. "What concern is it of yours?"

"But surely," I urged, "you could not have examined her as to her qualifications."

"I don't want any examinations," he growled still louder. "I can tell a teacher by just looking at her. I don't need to ask any questions."

At this moment a gentleman entered, and wished to call his attention to a school-book.

"What is your name?" demanded the school official.

The gentleman put his hand in his pocket for his card.

"I don't want any thing to do with a great fool who don't know his name," shouted the trustee, while the gentleman turned on his heel in disgust and left him.

"But I wish to lay the facts before you," I continued, thinking he could not have known them, and I stated the case.

"But what I want are the facts," he interrupted.

"That is just what I have stated," I replied, and I went over them again.

Again he shouted :

"I tell you I don't want arguments; give me the facts."

By this time I was fully convinced of the kind of person I had met, and could endure his insolence no longer.

"Sir," I replied, "you want facts, and now you shall have them: First, you are a conceited fool; second, you don't know the first element of gentlemanly behavior; third, you are a damage to the schools you pretend to manage. Good-morning"

and I left him, perhaps, a little wiser than when I found him. I certainly was a great deal wiser.

The subject burned in my mind all day, but I was at a complete loss what to do or say. I was but one of the million busy inhabitants of the great city, and had no time or opportunity to attempt to remedy this great evil. I did not yet know the full extent of it. At last I thought of an old acquaintance who had formerly been on the Board of Education, and to him I applied for information and such consolation as he could give. To him I related my brief experience with the school trustee.

"This trustee is a specimen of many," said he. "It is well known that a position can not be obtained in our city schools without political or personal influence ; 30,000 teachers in the State of New York alone, are thus employed. The commissioner declares the fitness of a candidate, and the trustee hires him. The grounds of their decisions are frequently of an astounding nature. As a rule, the schools are not what the teachers make them, but what the school boards desire them to be. The defects in our school system are due to the fact that it has been ridden by inefficient school committees, as Sinbad was ridden by the Old Man

of the Sea. The results are ridiculously inadequate to the time and money expended upon it. New York State alone expends over ten million dollars a year for public schools. We are graduating children by the thousand each year, who, in any proper and comprehensive use of the terms, can neither read nor write. Our school system, as a whole, is a miserable and lamentable failure. The management of school boards has resulted in disaster. A system in which a tinker has the appointment of a teacher, is no system at all. All the reports, big with columns of figures, cannot alter the fact, that political management is the greatest enemy of the school system."

These were startling statements.

"Can these things be?" I pondered as I returned home.

On my arrival I found Bob in his room going through some strange contortions that alarmed me. He was bending backward and forward over a book with his eyes shut, repeating some words in a kind of ecstasy, like a Parsee dervish.

"What is the matter with Bob?" I cried to his mother. "Come here, quick."

Together we entered his room. The contortions

were evidently becoming more violent as he repeated the strange words more rapidly.

"Why, Bobby," I cried, "what are you doing?"

"Oh, don't say a word!" he exclaimed, motioning us away; "I've nearly got it; now you've put me all out. When a verb has two or more subjects connected by *or* or *nor*, it agrees with them in the plural,—no that ain't it, singular number."

"Poor child!" I cried, "what is all this about?"

"I'm only learning my grammar lesson. Now don't talk. When a verb has two or more subjects connected—"

"Bob," I continued, "do you understand that—what those words mean?"

"No, and I never can," replied he; "but I must learn it or I shall be marked down. When a verb—"

"Stop," said I. "I pity you. If that is grammar, let it go to the dogs. I don't wish you to study it."

"Hurrah!" shouted the boy, coming out of his trance in a trice, and slinging his book across the room. "Now I understand. I'll go and find Uncle Ag. and have some fun."

And off he went, sliding down the banister like a

shot from a catapult. Soon his merry voice was heard ringing through the house.

"I don't intend that my children any longer shall be the victims of such a method of instruction," said I to my wife. "Let us keep them, while we can, bright and cheerful, before their minds are dulled and demented by such rubbish as that."

I spoke strongly, for I felt deeply after the revelations of the day.

CHAPTER V.

MISCHIEF BREWING.

‘PAPA, what is a cataract?’ asked Willie one evening a few days after the events of the last chapter.

“Why do you ask, my boy?” I replied.

“Because,” said he, “the definition in the book at school is, ‘water pouring over a precipice.’ But when the teacher asked Bob, he said it was formed by pouring water over a Presbyterian. The boys all laughed and the teacher smiled until she saw Bob was getting red in the face, then she explained it to him.”

“That is,” said Uncle Ag., “she defined the definition and explained the explanation. How it ever entered into the mind of man to conceive that the committing to memory by children of the definitions of words in others more unintelligible could be of any possible benefit to them, is a mystery to me. The spelling-book is a wicked book, an invention of the Evil One. Spelling-books block the way they

profess to open. When we study a foreign language, we do not get a spelling-book. We speak it. We read and write it.

“‘The schools,’ said President Garfield, ‘continue to perpetrate that indefensible outrage upon the young mind, which keeps a child sitting in silence in a vain attempt to hold his mind to the words of a printed book for six hours in a day. Herod was merciful, for he finished his slaughter of the innocents in one day. We silence its sweet clamor by cramming its hungry mind with words. It asks for bread, and we give it a stone. It is to me a perpetual wonder that any child’s love of knowledge survives the outrages of the school-room.’

“When I see children going to school with the same pleasure which they enjoy in the exercise of their faculties elsewhere,” continued Ag., “then I will believe that the true way has been found, and not till then. How much longer the world will go on in this blind way while the true direction lies before it in the nature of the children themselves, I cannot say. But I am glad that I have no children to be put through this pernicious process.”

“A good many children seem to have survived it,” I remarked.

"Yes," continued Ag., "but the most precious years of their lives have been worse than wasted. I will illustrate: I met a boy, a few days since, evidently dragging himself to school. 'Where are you going?' I asked. 'To school,' was the reply. 'What do you go to school for?' I asked. 'Dunno,' said he listlessly. 'Do you study?' 'No.' 'Play?' 'No.' 'What do you do there?' I inquired again. 'Wait for school to let out,' was the frank reply.

"Yes, thought I, that is how the time is spent of a large proportion of the children—and teachers as well.

"'Look here,' said I, 'do you see that man climbing that telegraph pole?' 'Yes, sir.' 'Can you climb it?' 'You bet.' He was awake now. 'I'll give you a quarter if you will,' said I. In a moment his books were on the ground, and he went up like a squirrel. "Now tell me if you see the messages going along the wires, and how they get around the poles,' I called. 'What yer giving us?' was the disgusted reply, as he came down. Then in answer to my questions he gave me a tolerably correct description of the conveying of telegraphic messages.

"'How did you find out?' I asked. 'By hanging around the telegraph offices and watching and ask-

ing questions," he replied. "Have you learned any thing about electricity in school?" I asked. "Yes, sir, in the spelling-book." "And what did you learn there?" "To spell the word and give the definition." "And what is the definition?" "The electric fluid." "And what is that?" "Dunno." And with this return to the subject of school his mind relapsed into the comatose state in which I found him, he picked up his books, and dragged on to school to grow strong and wise on husks and chaff.

"You ought to be a teacher, Ag.," suggested my wife.

"If I were," he replied, "my school would be in the streets and fields, like that of Socrates. No person that has the teaching—that is, the awakening—instinct, can live and work 'cabined, cribbed, confined' in the iron-bound systems of the schools. You know I could not endure it when a boy, and so ran away to sea. I believe the schools are responsible for the ruin of many an ardent youth, by driving him out as they did me. They are contrary to nature, and nature will win in the end."

"Oh, Uncle Ag.," cried the boys, "tell us all about it, when you went to school and played tricks on the teacher."

"No," cried Willie, "tell us how you went to sea and fought the pirates."

"Now you are in for it, Ag.," said I.

"So it seems," he replied, "and I must get out of it the best way I can. I will tell you one of my first lessons in electricity. We had in boarding-school a dear old professor of chemistry, familiarly called Doctor Johnny, as wise and good and faithful a teacher as ever lived, whom the boys all loved, but often, too often, delighted to tease. The old doctor was devotedly attached to his scientific studies and experiments, which he understood much better than the boy-nature with which he had to deal. The boys, in his frequent words, were prone to forget the purpose for which they came, and to seek occasion for mischief, more than chemical knowledge. One day the Doctor had brought the class all out upon the floor to receive a shock from the electric machine. After much difficulty, all were ranged in a circle, joining hands and connecting with the handles of the apparatus, while the old man applied himself vigorously to the crank. He turned and turned, but no shock was felt. One of the boys had broken the circuit. Still the Doctor ground, stopping every moment to ask in his earnest,

nasal tones, 'Don't you feel it yet?' But no shock. Still harder he turned, until the perspiration stood on his brow; when one of the boys, to vary the proceedings, slyly inserted a pin into his neighbor, who suddenly sprang from the floor, with a scream like a Comanche. 'Yes, yes,' drawled the now delighted Doctor, 'I thought you would feel it pretty soon.' It is certain they all saw the point, if they did not feel the electric shock."

After this followed a story for Willie of grizzly ghosts and dreadful deeds until we were all glad to retire. Ag. had to go down to his club, he said, "to see a man." As we passed the boys' chamber we heard Bob planning the tricks he was going to play upon his teacher when he should go to boarding-school, and Willie rehearsing the sanguinary scenes in which he was to figure as the hero of all the actions.

"I think," said my wife, "that much of the mischief that is made by the youngsters at school and college is in imitation of their elders whom they hear relate with so much gusto the follies of their school and college days, as if these were their chief occupation. The new-comers feel incited thereby not to fall behind the traditions of their elders, and so keep up the evil customs."

We passed on and left the boys consulting together; but thought no more of it until later developments, which soon made themselves manifest. Some time in the course of the night, we were all awakened by a terrible crash as if the roof were falling in. Alarmed, I sprang up, thinking of fire and burglars, and ran over the house, but found no trace of either. As I passed the boys' room I noticed that they appeared to be sound asleep, but at the same time there was a slight movement under the clothes, which were drawn over their heads. As I was passing Ag.'s room, he silently invited me to enter. He had evidently just come in. A provoked smile was on his face as he pointed to a most astonishing collection of debris in the centre of his room.

"Those children," said he "have been playing one of their little tricks on me. All these things were piled against my door, and when I opened it, they came down with a crash which awoke you. "But no harm is done," he concluded, with a grim chuckle, as he began to pick up the fragments.

"I should think there were some harm done," said I, as I looked at Ag. standing in the midst of the ruins. The table was overturned, which had been

placed against the door, and on which chairs and every thing movable had been piled ; chairs were lying flat, with broken legs and backs. The hat-box containing Ag.'s best hat was demolished, and the contents of the inkstand were emptied into the hat ; a couple of bottles of choice wine, which had crowned the pyramid were found on the floor, on each other's necks, in fond embrace, *a la* Hogarth, while the rich Madeira was drunk up by the stained carpet. A trunk which had formed part of the barricade, had burst open in the fall, and its contents were scattered about as if the trunk had just fallen from the hands of a baggage-smasher. "This is rather too practical a joke," said I ; "I can't allow this."

"Please say nothing about it," insisted Ag. "I will get even with them and perhaps spoil their taste for midnight jokes." So it was passed over in silence except when a brief reference was made at table next morning to the noise. Willie suggested that perhaps Uncle Ag. had been to see too many men and found on retiring that some one had stolen the keyhole of his door, and so had broken in. Ag. said nothing, but looked very solemn. A few nights after, we were suddenly aroused by piercing screams from the boys' room. I rushed in and saw

them sitting up in the bed, white with terror and pointing speechless to the closet door. I opened it, but saw nothing, yet thought I heard a step in the direction of Ag.'s room, which communicated with the closet.

"What is the matter?" I asked.

As soon as he could speak, Willie cried: "Did n't you see it? there, in the closet," and hid his head in the clothes.

"There is nothing here," said I; "what did you see?"

"A ghost, a dreadful ghost!" cried both together. "It had long hair, and horns, and a tail, and great fierce eyes, and long sharp tusks, and claws, and it growled, and pulled the clothes off, and tried to pull us out of bed," they cried alternately, as each could catch breath or think of some new horror.

"It was tall as the ceiling," said Bob.

"And frightened us almost to death," cried Willie.

"Why," said I, "Willie, I did not think you were afraid of ghosts, but wanted to see one."

"But I don't want to see any more like that," said he, hiding his head under the clothes.

The next day and for several days the family and

neighbors were regaled with ghost stories served up in every variety and style.

"Uncle Ag., do you believe in ghosts?" asked Willie, next day.

"Oh, yes," said he. "I have seen many of them. One got into my room the other night and piled my things against the door, and made a great noise. It may be the same one that got into your room."

"I think this house is haunted," said I.

"By the spirit of mischief," continued my wife.

"Those who raise bad spirits, must expect to be visited by them," added Ag.

After this, quiet resumed its sway in the house, but the boys would not sleep without having the doors and closets locked and barred, and taking the further precaution of looking under the bed every night. Willie seemed to have lost, for a time, his fondness for midnight tales of terror, and Bob his taste for stories of the ghostly variety, after dark. Little Harry, on the other hand, was undisturbed. His nature was extremely practical. Having been told that he must eat fat to make him grow, after trying in vain to do so and leaving the pieces on his plate, he said: "I want Kitty to grow up and be a big cat, but I want to be a little boy an awfully

long while." He having been punished on an occasion of disobedience said: "It is the bad spirit in me and he can't feel it." Then being told to try to think of some way to get rid of the bad spirit, after sitting awhile, he said: "I know how. Take me and give me lots of ice-cream. The bad spirit does not like it, it's so cold, and he will come up out of my throat."

After hearing some older children discussing the death of a playmate, with much seriousness he exclaimed: "The man who invented death ought to be choked. A remark as original and true as the famous exclamation of Sancho Panza.

Such expressions in children teach us how soon the mind reaches the limit of original ideas, or, as Socrates taught, that they are born with us, and the child knows as much as the man, and needs only to have its ideas drawn out—that is, to be educated.

"Mamma," exclaimed Teazel one evening, "I want to go to boarding-school. All the girls are going: Lucretia Smith and Jule Juvenal and all who were at Madame Fasquelle's. Jule Juvenal says her papa and mamma are tired of having her at home. Judge Juvenal, her father, is very busy, and is away much of the time. Her mother goes

to operas, parties, and balls nearly all the time, and she wants Jule out of the way. She wishes her to go to boarding-school to finish up before she comes out. Jule, you know, is very pretty, and says her mother is jealous of her, and wants to keep her back as long as she can. But she don't care; she will go to school and have a good time and find some one to flirt with. Her brother Jack is an awful wild boy. His father can't do any thing with him. He won't stay at any school, and all he wants to do is to stand on the corner, and smoke cigarettes with the other boys of that class, and flirt his handkerchief at all the girls who pass. And he is only fourteen."

"What has all this to do with boarding-school?" I asked, at the first pause in the flow of her remarks.

"Well, the other girls are going, and I want to go. You know we did n't learn any thing at Madame Fasquelle's but *voulez-vous* and *oui, madame*. It was very fashionable, and the girls all came dressed in immense style, with new frills, bangs, and frizzles every day. When we were not talking about the latest styles and the gay fellows, we learned about mythology and æsthetic culture. But every thing was awfully aristocratic and high-toned."

"Except the language you learned, judging by

the terms you use," I continued. "Certainly the bills were high enough to please the most fastidious. I think I received the least return for that expenditure of any I ever made. Madame Fasquelle's French and English boarding and day school for young ladies, as it was called in the prospectus, taught all the languages, arts, sciences, and known accomplishments necessary for a finished education. But the result was woefully inadequate to the outlay."

"How a young lady," observed Uncle Ag., "can 'complete' her education at the age at which a young man generally begins his, is a mystery to me. Perhaps the girls have superior powers of absorption. This is a question for the co-educationists. They certainly seem to have the power of shedding instruction poured upon them, as a duck does water; for after one of these 'finished' graduates has been out of school a few months, not the slightest trace of her instruction can be found upon her. But I am a bachelor and not initiated into the mysteries of the feminine mind, much less of the wonderful finishing process referred to."

"At all events," continued mother, "Teazel has finished with that school, and I am unable to decide

what to do next. Her education is not even begun yet, for she does not know how to study or to apply her mind to any subject long enough to really know any thing about it. I am heartily disgusted with the conversation of many educated ladies—educated in the modern sense—who flit over every subject like a swallow over the water, never actually touching it.”

“The fault seems to be with the mothers,” said Ag. “They try to educate their daughters as they were educated. It all proceeds from the false premise that the girl is to occupy only an ornamental position in the world, while the boy must be useful. Hence, an effort is made to give him some genuine training, and as much useful information as possible, exact and thorough, however limited. But the girl must be accomplished, and in order to fit her for “society” and eligibility for a good marriage, they strive to give her a veneering and varnish of all the arts and accomplishments, warranted not to rub off or break before the polished piece of household furniture is disposed of. Men do not care to inspect too closely, either before or after the bargain. But the effect upon the minds of the daughters, who, in turn, become mothers, is, as you say, deplorable. I

do not see the panacea for all these ills, in the much-vaunted co-education, but in *real* education—true development of mind, soul, and body. As you say, the first thing Teazel needs is to learn how to study; how to use the faculties which she has.”

“That is what I have been thinking over,” said my wife. “Mrs. Smith was in to-day and advised me to send Teazel, with her daughter Lucretia, to Doctor Grotius’ Female Institute up the Hudson. She says she will be removed from the fashionable frivolities which take much of girls’ attention in the city, and that there she will be under the best of moral influence and most careful attention, both as to her studies and associates. But there is no place for a child like home.”

“If of the right kind,” suggested Ag. “I should judge that Julia Juvenal were better away from hers.”

“She is going to Dr. Grotius’ too,” exclaimed Teazel; “and her brother Jack is going to a boys’ school just across the river, and we will have such jolly times. Can’t I go, mamma?”

“If jolly times are what you want,” I replied, “I fear you won’t find them at Doctor Grotius’. He is recommended to me by a clergyman of my acquaint-

ance as especially watchful and strict in his supervision of the young ladies sent to him, and he has the highest testimonials. I think I shall send you there to see if he can get some of the nonsense out of your head, and bring to the surface some of the many good qualities that we know are in our darling girl."

And so we sent our lamb out from her warm fold into the jaws of the wolf, as many others have done, repenting only when forever too late.

CHAPTER VI.

A VISIT TO THE PUBLIC SCHOOL.

A FEW days later, as I came in one evening, I found that Bob had relapsed into one of his attacks of word-madness. He was observed going about the house with his eyes half shut, oblivious to all about him, and muttering a medley of words over and over again, which, as nearly as I could make out, were: "Angie two times, nigger on a pond." "Angie two times, nigger on a pond," he continued to mutter, until I stopped him and demanded what he meant.

"I don't know," was the reply, "but it's what the scholars all say at school. 'Angie two times—'"

"Now stop this mummary," I exclaimed, "and let me see if I can find an interpretation of it."

Willie was called in, and by reference to the book I learned at last that the words were, "Angle: two lines meeting at one point," which they were required to repeat in concert at school as a definition; and this was what Bob made of it.

"Now what is an angle?" I inquired.

"Don't know," was the reply.

"Is it an animal?" asked Uncle Ag.

Bob thought it was.

"Has it legs?"

"No, it crawls."

"How do you make that out?" asked Ag., perplexed.

"I've seen lots of them in the garden," exclaimed Bob, in triumph.

"Ah, angle worms, but they are hardly angles," said Ag., smiling. "In fact, I should say that they were uncommonly deficient in that article."

"Oh, I know," exclaimed Willie; "it has wings like our teacher."

"I should say," replied Ag., "that she were not particularly angular by your description, though she may be angelic, but that is not an angle."

"Have you never seen one?" I asked, in astonishment at these misconceptions.

"No, sir," both boys replied.

"This is astounding!" I exclaimed; "that children are taught, day after day, words—nothing but words—when the simplest diagram or illustration would suffice to convey an idea of the thing."

"I think you would do well to visit the school," said my wife, "and learn more of their methods."

"I will do so, and doubtless shall learn something," I replied, having in mind the result of my previous quest in search of information.

"And you will see our teacher," added Willie.

So one fine morning beheld me boldly starting out to visit the public school, yet with as many fears and misgivings as the truant school-boy, compelled to return after a long vagrancy. As I neared the building—a large, six-story structure, of plain brick, reminding me much of the immense, lofty warehouses down town—my ears were greeted by a strange sound that puzzled me. From the interior came, at irregular intervals, an abrupt, quick kind of shout, or song, as of a hundred young voices at once; but the words, if any, were utterly unintelligible. I stood and listened for some time, but was unable to make any thing out of it, and at length entered. I inquired for the principal, and was shown up the stairs, past several rooms in which numbers of children sat on low benches, silent and listless, or making a dull murmur, above which was heard the strident tones of the teachers, pouring into the little pitchers their morning modicum of words.

As I was ushered into the principal's office, expecting to see the typical teacher, of pale, broad brow, spectacled eyes, and modest manners, I was somewhat surprised to see before me a burly, middle-aged man with low brow, short, stiff black hair, small cunning eyes, and a heavy face. He was seated in his arm-chair, with his feet upon a table before him, reading the morning paper. He answered my greeting curtly, without removing his feet, or paper, and inquired as to my business. I told him that I had come to visit the school. He looked at me keenly, as if suspicious of my purpose, and inquired if I had children in the school. Upon being informed that I had, he expressed a willingness to show me the school, as a condescension on his part. There were twelve hundred children in the school, which was a grammar school, intermediate between the primary and high school. The children were divided into classes and grades according to ages. We began with the lowest. The little colts were trotted out and put through their paces, which consisted mostly of singing and calisthenic exercises, and were very pretty to look at, but I observed that the children went through them in a listless, mechanical manner.

"How are they taught regularly?" I inquired.

A class was brought out, and as the questions were read by the teacher from the book, the answers were shouted out in concert by the class, but I could catch only a few of the words. The strange sound that I had heard on entering was explained; also the origin of "Angie two times." It was evident that very few of the pupils knew the answers; but most caught them deftly from a few leaders, and of these I saw by their expression that but two or three had any idea of the import of the words or of the entire performance. As we passed to another room, I saw a class going through a most peculiar performance. The principal informed me that they were studying their spelling lesson. All had their books before them, and, at a signal from the teacher, spelled in concert, four or five times, each word, then passed to the next. I began to feel oppressed, as if I were in another world, inhabited by strange beings, and a strong desire came over me to get out as quickly as possible. I determined, however, to go through it all. I found everywhere the same stereotyped, mechanical process of memorizing, while the children were dull and uninterested.

"This is a graded school," said I to the principal.

"Yes, sir," he replied, "and you won't find a better graded school in the city. We have every thing reduced to the most perfect system. Each class goes to a certain page prescribed in each book at a given date, and is then examined for promotion to the next grade. Those who can't pass must go through the grade again."

"Do you not make allowances for certain deficiencies in the examination which may not exist in the mind of the pupil?" I asked.

"We can make no exceptions," was the answer. "It would cause disorder and interfere with the system."

"And in the case of unusually bright pupils, are they not promoted more rapidly?"

"Not often. The teacher must bring her class, as a whole, up to the prescribed standard, and if too large a proportion fail in examination, she is dismissed. You see we have nearly a perfect system here."

"I see," said I, "that you have the building and benches, the machinery and material. May I be allowed to sample some of the manufactured products, so to speak?"

The principal looked at me with an uncertain

look, as if not quite sure whether I was in jest or earnest; but he said, "Certainly, sir. Go into any of the rooms and ask whatever questions you please, but you must remember that you do not fully understand our great public-school system. It is the growth of experience, the wisdom of our forefathers, the bulwark of our liberties, and is as nearly perfect as human institutions can be."

I remarked that I thought I had heard something of the kind before; but that the older our institutions are, the more likely they are to settle into the soil and be overgrown by climbers, creepers, and parasites, as old ships are clogged by barnacles.

He looked still more puzzled, as if to make out whether I meant to insinuate that he was a parasite or a barnacle. But he said nothing, and moved away, as if glad to be rid of a troublesome visitor.

I passed to a room where a teacher was "hearing" a geography lesson. The questions were put in the words of the book, the prescribed answers were shouted out in the usual manner, and the machinery ran smoothly enough, until I stopped it to ask a question. The teacher had been accustomed to require her pupils to say, "The equator is an imaginary line passing around the earth." It had never

occurred to her that the boys and girls of her school had no idea what an imaginary line was, until I asked them how wide they thought the equator is. Some thought it was five thousand miles wide, others two thousand, and others said they could jump over it. One pupil said he thought they got out and drew the ships over, and another said he had read that a canal had been dug through it.

"What is the name of this canal?" I asked.

"The Suez Canal," was the answer.

I was then shown into another department, in which, he said, the discipline was the best in the city. As we entered, several hundred children rose at a signal from the teacher, as one man, or rather as an automaton, which they more nearly resembled. I have seen something of military discipline, but nothing like that. They remained standing, motionless and expressionless, with their eyes all fixed, I observed, upon a certain mark on the wall. Then, at another wave of the hand, all dropped into their seats like a plummet, and remained sitting bolt upright, with their arms folded behind them in a most painful posture, and their eyes fixed in dead vacancy upon the wall before them, until they received the next signal. The questions, on which they had evi-

dently been long drilled, were answered in the same simultaneous manner, and all the exercises conducted with the regularity and precision of clock-work.

"What do you think of that?" asked the principal, as we left the room.

"It is magnificent," I answered; "that is, it would be, if they were not human beings."

"What do you mean?" asked he.

"I mean," said I, "that the working of children in lots is a great convenience to the teacher, and is well fitted to impress the public with the idea that there is much done in the schools. There is a prescribed routine of operations and a display of order that is admired. But it is machine-work, and machines make no allowances. Gradation assumes and enforces a uniformity among pupils that is false to the facts. The bed of Procrustes, with its lopings and stretchings, is an accomplished fact. Children are not masses or classes. They are persons. Each comes into the world stamped with a divine individuality. But the factory principle in education strives to obliterate all the marks of personality, until they come out rounded like marbles, as nearly alike as the machine can

make them. This carving and crushing process is not education."

"But we cannot manage them otherwise," said he.

"I supposed the schools were for the children," I replied, "but I see that the children are for the schools, and the schools for the teachers. Good-morning."

I had spent another day in acquiring important information, and I retired reflecting, in the light of what I had previously learned as to school boards and trustees, how our school systems are made to support such men as they and he, while the parents are powerless to prevent it or to protect their children from this imposition and injury.

Before I left the building, however, I went to call upon the teacher of my children, as there was now an intermission, and I wished to meet her for several reasons, among which, I confess, was much curiosity to judge of Willie's paragon, and the source of her influence. As I entered the room, I saw before me a flower of loveliness, like a pale lily on her stalk bending gracefully to the breeze. I could but observe, at the same time, a weary, far-seeking look *beneath the long* lashes of her deep, brown eyes,

showing, as was easy to be seen, that she was amidst surroundings much out of keeping with her nature. I introduced myself as the father of Willie and Robby, when a pleased smile suffused her face with a most inviting glow, while she gave me a cordial welcome with her fair, white hand.

"I am so glad to see you," she said with a voice of liquid music. "You are the first parent of any of these children I have seen, or that seems to have a thought of them or the school."

"You know," said I, "that we Americans prefer to bring up our children by proxy, and educate them by contract. We have the most blind confidence in professionals. As we commit our business to our lawyers and our bodies to our physicians, so we give our infants to nurses, send our children to teachers, pay the bills; and consider the matter settled. If one doctor does not suit, we try another; but we never think that we have any duties in this matter of education."

"I do so wish," said she, "that I could meet the parents of these children and show them what priceless pearls some of them are suffering to be ruined here. But I am not able to reach them through the children or otherwise. That a teacher can care

for any thing but her salary, seems to be beyond their comprehension. And I am in danger of losing even that, much as I need it," she concluded, with a sigh.

"I assure you," said I, "that you have my deepest sympathy in your work and your trials, as I have learned of them through my children. When a true teacher can be found, it would seem that the authorities would prize and endeavor to retain her. I would be glad to use my influence for you, but, in truth, I am as powerless in the matter as you are; and so are all the parents. But what is the trouble?" I inquired.

"It is well known," said she. "At the last examination my class failed to reach the required average, and if they fail again I shall be dismissed. I know many eager applicants are using every means to secure my place."

"In my opinion," said I, "your teaching is the best my children have ever had. They seem to be waking up, and for the first time to take real pleasure in their school, and to love and respect their teacher."

"I am glad to hear you say so," replied she, "for it is my only recompense. The means I have

taken to interest and improve these children are what is most objected to by my superiors. It is stepping outside of the prescribed course and introducing innovations; yet I am satisfied that my pupils really understand much better the subjects traversed than the others, though I have had but brief experience with them. But it is all forbidden now. As my pupils were active and interested, and not seated in death-like order, like mummies in their cases, there was complaint of lack of discipline. Hence I have been obliged to step back into the harness and help drag the car of Juggernaut, which is killing me and crushing them."

Tears stood in her eyes, in the depths of which I saw a sorrow and sympathy which tears could not express. I could say nothing, but could not help reflecting that thus the true teachers are hemmed in and crushed by this iron system, or driven from the schools, as is commonly the case.

"Miss Miller," said I, at length, extending my hand, "whatever personal griefs you may have, are not for me to mention; but you may be assured of my heartfelt sympathy in all your efforts as a teacher. You have, besides, an ardent friend and lover in my boy Willie, which I consider a compliment to both

of you, for his heart is as pure and his insight as keen as an angel's."

"Yes," said she, "I do feel complimented, as any one may, by the love of a pure and honest child; and I love the dear boy. He asked me one day," continued she, smiling through her tears, "if I had wings."

"His Uncle Ag. put that nonsense in his head," said I.

"Uncle Ag. is evidently a wonderful person, by Willie's description."

"He is a grand, good man," said I, now in earnest, "pure gold, a rare phenomenon in these days, I assure you."

"Has he any children?" asked she. "He is very fond of them."

"Oh, no, indeed. He is a bachelor, an old bachelor some say, but his heart is as young and fresh as a boy's. He is a boy at home, and as full of fun and mischief as any. But he is fully in accord with your views of education, and even more pronounced in his expression of them. You two are kindred spirits, through your love and sympathy for children. I wish you could meet each other."

"Kindred spirits rarely meet in this world, you

know," she replied, while the far-away look came again into her eyes, as she concluded, "and when they do meet, they are not always the happier. I think it would be better for us not to meet," and deeper depths seemed to open in her fathomless eyes. I could not pursue the subject further, anxious as I really was to have them meet, after this interview, which had more than confirmed my previous impressions. I pressed her hand with sincere admiration, invited her to call upon us, and returned home, determined, if possible, to arouse Ag.'s interest in Willie's treasure, whom I was now willing to concede to be all that he declared, less the wings. I was at a loss to know how my wish could be carried out, but fate had already taken the matter in hand and had arranged a most unexpected solution.

CHAPTER VII.

AN ITALIAN EPISODE.

“**N**OW, Ag.,” said I, on my return, after relating the experience of the day, “I am a convert to Willie’s theory, and I should not be surprised to see the wings appear at any time.”

“Then she might fly away,” suggested Bob.

“I had not thought of that,” said I, “but I believe it is reported that angel visits are of brief duration, and only those without wings can be retained among us any length of time.”

“It is too much to expect,” said my wife, “that such a teacher as we have found will remain with our children.”

“I’ll predict that she won’t fly away,” remarked Ag.

“She may do what is the same for us,” continued my wife—“that is, get married. You know when we have a household treasure in the kitchen, she is sure to take her departure to that bourne from which

no maid returns, and I fear the same result with our recent treasure in the school."

"I should judge," said I, "that she has had an experience in heart affairs which was not altogether happy, and that she were not in, what we business men would call, the matrimonial line, at present; but there is no predicting the course of the market in that class of goods. At one time there may be nothing doing, and stock will hang on our hands with no prospect of ever getting it off. Then, at the most unexpected moment, a rise will occur, and old articles go off with a rush, which have been held for years."

"Then there is some hope that I may get Ag. off from my hands yet," remarked my wife, giving him a gentle tap on the shoulder with her fan, as an auctioneer might refer to a piece of merchandise for which there was an unexpected bid. "He's about the most unsalable lot in that line that I know of. You must admit, Ag., that I have exhausted every device in order to dispose of you."

"Why not have an auction?" suggested Willie. "Hang out the red flag. 'Bankrupt sale, great sacrifice. No goods guaranteed.' It might turn out

as well as in Miss Davidson's poem which I learned to speak, when

“ ‘ Forty old maids,
Some younger, some older,
Each lugged an old bachelor
Home on her shoulder.’ ”

“You seem to be extremely anxious to dispose of me,” said Ag., good humoredly, “but there is no prospect. I am entirely out of the market. Besides, I fear I should prove a bad investment, as I was spoiled long ago by the over-fondness of my sister, and I should be unwilling to impose so greatly upon any other woman.”

“But where love is, you know,” replied she, “there is no obligation. Love knows no law, but finds its pleasure in giving. It seeks not its own, but another's.”

“Ah! this is a change of subject indeed,” exclaimed Ag. “I was speaking of marriage; still there may be some connection between them; however, if what you say be true, why is it that love always seeks the possession of its object and is miserable without it? It seems to be its own happiness that is sought. instead of another's; which is but

another form of selfishness. On this theory of true love it ought to be equally satisfied to see or know that its object is happy, though far and forever removed. But young love, instead of remaining in his childhood state of innocence and beauty, rapidly passes through the stages of admiration, honor, and adoration, to the adolescence of possession and the old age of indifference and neglect. The bandage drops from his eyes, the bow from his hand, the beauty from his features, and he totters in ignoble senility to an early and unhonored grave. The immortal loves are the unpossessed, from the days of Dante and Beatrice, Petrarch and Laura, Abelard and Héloïse, down to the last lover who worships at the secret shrine of the loved and lost—

“ ‘ Whom the angels call Lenore,
Nameless here for evermore.’ ”

True love, like the perfect circle, is imaginary.”

“ But there are thousands of real though unknown loves in the world,” said my wife, with a look of tenderness which one only could see and interpret. •

“ I presume,” replied Ag., “ that if Dante had possessed his Beatrice, his stern, sour nature would not have allowed him to be happy with her. If
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Laura had been Petrarch's wife instead of another's, he would not have thought of addressing sonnets to her. Perhaps to some other fair one."

My wife gave me a look suggesting a change of topic, but it was not necessary, for at this moment Bob, who had not been greatly interested in the subject, exclaimed :

"Uncle Ag., won't you take me to the circus? There will be elephants and camels and chariot races and the wonderful tattooed man, who has nothing but paint to keep him warm."

"Bob's idea is not so strange as it may appear," remarked Ag., recalling himself with an effort from the reverie in which he seemed to be absorbed. "With the natives of the South Sea Islands, tattooing is employed to a great extent as a substitute for clothing; and it does certainly appear to be such. Even our own ancestors have worn this picturesque costume."

"A surgeon in the German army," I remarked, "proposes a practical use of tattooing by marking the bodies of the soldiers over the more important arteries and organs, that they may know where they are and what to do in case of wounds."

"Better tattoo their brains," remarked Ag.

"Education is the best tattooing. But how many of our fellow-men do we see indelibly marked with the imperfections of their early training, which no subsequent polishing can efface? Like impressions made in pottery before burning, subsequent glazing only makes them more conspicuous. Let us tattoo the brains, but beware to whom we entrust the work."

"I don't want to be tattooed," said Bob, "but I want to go to the circus. Won't you take me?"

Ag. did not seem to heed, but had relapsed into his reverie in a manner most unusual for him.

"And I want you to take me to the hospital fair," said Willie. "It's very nice, and everybody is going. Our teacher said there were lots of beautiful flowers and ferns there, and some fine paintings, and one in particular, a view of Mount Vesuvius and the Bay of Naples."

"What is the boy talking about?" exclaimed Ag., with a sudden start and a manner most unusual for him. "Vesuvius! Naples! what does he know about them?"

"Nothing," answered Willie. "I was only asking you to take me to the hospital fair."

"And me to the circus," added Bob.

"Oh, yes, I will take you anywhere; but is n't it about your bedtime? You need not be afraid of ghosts to-night."

The boys soon retired. Uncle Ag. seemed not to relish their society for the first time. After they had gone, silence rested upon the group. Ag., continuing vigorously to puff his cigar, seemed to lose himself in its fumes and in his thoughts. They were busy turning the pages of a long-sealed chapter, which the words of the evening had recalled, while memories both bright and bitter crowded his brain. At length he spoke.

"Do you know I had a love affair once?"

"I have no doubt of it," said I, "or you would not be a bachelor."

"Why? How?"

"Because no man reaches your time of life without having some affair of the heart, which, if favorable, anchors him safely in the port of matrimony; but when I see a whole-souled man like you drifting about the world half manned, I conclude that he has had an adverse gale from the same quarter which has driven him out to sea. Am I not right?"

"Nearly enough," he answered, "but mine was a very peculiar experience."

"Yes, they all are peculiar—to the parties themselves."

"Hush!" here interrupted my wife, who, with womanly sympathy, saw that I was leading Ag. away from his thoughts; also with womanly curiosity and interest in all affairs relating to the tender passion, desiring to hear his story. "Brother Ag. is a man to win the love of woman, and one whose regard any woman might well be proud to possess."

"That is where you, in the abundance of your goodness, overestimate the character of your sisters," said he, with some bitterness. "They are all daughters of Reuben, 'unstable as water,' kissed by every dallying breeze, and showing a new image to each passing form."

"Your breeze must have been a perfect gale," said I, "for you to feel it so deeply, at this length of time."

"Hear it, then judge for yourself," said Ag., with evident emotion.

"In the summer of 186—, I was in Italy. It was soon after our war. I had left the army and gone abroad for a change and rest, and to recover from an old wound. My roving life had given me but little of ladies' society, and I had arrived to manhood, heart-

whole, with little experience in the fascinating arts of the fair sex—just the man to fall captive to the first assailant. One evening I was returning, with a companion, from the ascent of Vesuvius. The setting sun had turned to molten gold the placid waters of the incomparable Bay of Naples, and we were contemplating in quiet pleasure the entrancing calmness of the lovely scene, when our ears were greeted by piercing shrieks from a neighboring glen. Instantly I thought of brigands. I knew the region was infested with them—a place where truly ‘every prospect pleases, and only man is vile.’ We ran in the direction of the sound and soon saw a carriage, containing a gentleman and two ladies, surrounded by the villains, who were trying to drag them from the carriage. We sprang upon them and soon put them to flight. They are all cowards in reality, like most villains. When we returned from the pursuit, we found that the elder lady had fainted, and her companions were engaged in striving to resuscitate and compose her, for evidently the shock had completely overcome her after the danger was past. She was a large, plain woman, dressed in rather gaudy style, and the gentleman had the self-possessed manners which showed them to be Amer-

icans. He heartily and cordially thanked us for our timely assistance, emitted several strong adjectives in reference to the Italians, and turned to his companion.

“ ‘Come, mamma, cheer up, it ’s all over. Here are the gentlemen who rescued us. You must thank them,’ said a remarkably clear, sweet voice, and a face appeared of wonderful beauty and vivacity, a sweet girlish face, where innocence and truth were stamped in all their native loveliness.

“ ‘No thanks are necessary,’ I found breath to say, while I gazed in admiration upon the fair, young American, who returned my look with a free, frank expression of her lustrous brown eyes, and a straightforward glance, the farthest removed from coquettish coyness on the one hand, and from bold freedom on the other. It was the look of innocence, and at the same time of one not a stranger to society and admiration. She was indeed one of those fortunate beings whose whole life had been passed in an atmosphere of love and admiration, which seemed to her as her native air, and was received as freely and unconsciously.

“ ‘Oh, take me home, take me home at once, I shall die!’ hysterically exclaimed the mother, who

could not at once be calmed. The gentleman ordered the coachman, who now came sneaking up, to drive at once to their hotel, handed me his card, clasped our hands, and made us promise to call, while the deep, dark eyes of his daughter, as they turned again upon us, added still stronger assurance of welcome.

“As they drove away I looked at the card. It read ‘Josiah Miller, New York.’ I returned to my hotel in an abstracted mood. We intended to leave Naples the next day, but I found an excuse for remaining a few days. My companion, a young surgeon, who was making a hasty tour of the continent after completing his studies in Paris, was obliged to depart. As we parted at the station, he said, ‘Look out, old boy; you are hit; shot through the breast, very near the heart. If I do not mistake in my diagnosis, this will prove a more serious wound than that at Antietam. Prescription: Absolute avoidance of female society; a change of air and scene; travel, occupation; to be taken immediately and every day for six months. Nothing else can save you. If the case becomes worse, send for me. Take care of yourself. Good-by’ :—as if a man could take care of himself in this world; least of

all when he has fallen under the fascination of youth and beauty. It is unnecessary to say that I did not follow my friend's prescription. I called upon my new acquaintances and received a cordial welcome. I was overwhelmed with thanks for my timely assistance. Mrs. Miller was profuse in her gratitude, and delighted to rehearse the affair to every new-comer with exaggerated accounts of their danger and our bravery.

"I also soon learned that she had matrimonial intentions as to her daughter. She appreciated her for her worth and beauty, but valued them chiefly in a mercantile sense. She knew her worth, but was ready to dispose of her for a sufficient consideration. She evidently looked upon me with a view to an exchange. So much money, so much character, position, culture, and appearance, in exchange for her daughter. But I soon learned that the chief consideration in her eyes was rank and title. She did not estimate them of sufficient importance to overbalance every other consideration, but of very great value if combined with other acquirements. Wealth was not a *sine qua non*, if a title were its substitute ; but without such an equivalent, a poor suitor would be very unacceptable in her eyes.

“Mr. Miller was a very agreeable, practical man of business to whom his daughter was a pet child and nothing more. The ambitious schemes of the managing mother had never entered his mind; but, as he also was under her management, he availed himself of the subordinate’s position and avoided all responsibility in such matters. He gave no thought to whatever came under his wife’s department, which included pretty nearly every thing, except his business. She had a small fortune of her own, which served to occupy her energies in that direction. These facts I acquired, however, only after a prolonged acquaintance. At the time, I was as one in a dream. I lived only in the presence and thoughts of the beautiful maiden, who had bewitched me with her eyes, and held me in thrall by the bond of innocence and beauty. Old things were passed away, and all things had become new. My former life was as a dream that is past, and the future a brilliant phantom. I lived only in the blissful present—in the moments I passed in the society of my sweet charmer, and when absent, in counting the envious hours that intervened between us. She was to me a revelation. I never dreamed that such a being could inhabit this earth. Everything connected

with her was a mystery and an inspiration. The perfumes which breathed around her, a stray lock of her golden hair, a handkerchief, a glove, a flower which had lain upon her breast,—all were instinct with life and love, with perfectness and purity.

“What an incomprehensible fool is a man in love!” exclaimed Ag., after a lapse of reverie, with a sudden change of tone and gesture. “I have those trifles yet; but I dare not look at them. They are the silent witnesses of my temporary aberration of intellect, when I was like Nebuchadnezzar turned out to grass. At that period,” he continued, after a long pause, “I lived only from day to day, not considering where it might be leading, knowing only that I was miserable when out of the intoxication of her presence. She also seemed to watch for my coming, to grow lovelier and brighter when I appeared. She would sit like Desdemona at the feet of Othello, while she begged me to relate anew the tale of my wanderings and adventures. Her sympathy and admiration stood in her tearful eye and glowed in her blushing cheek, while her native truth and artlessness unsealed the currents of her deep and boundless love, gushing

from a heart as pure and open as a child's. I knew that it was love, though the word had not passed our lips, but the boundless emotions which burned in me made radiant also her alabaster cheek with the inward glow of a loving heart.

"Vows and promises were unthought of and unspoken in the presence of a passion so pure and patent. But the awakening came soon and sure.

"I had met several times at Mrs. Miller's an Italian count, Muzio, whom I had also seen in the cafés, and whom I knew to be an unprincipled *roué*. One afternoon, as I sat in blissful intoxication in the presence of my charmer, the Count called. As he was shown into the parlor I could but see that her mother received him in a most cordial manner. Instantly the thought flashed into my mind of the mother's ambition and intentions for her daughter. Then I awoke, for the first time, to the thought of the future and the end of my dream of bliss. When we parted, I clasped her hand and we gazed long and silently into each other's eyes as if to fathom the thoughts and intents of the heart. At length she said 'What is it?' with a more tender and trustful pressure of my hand. I could only say 'the Count.' 'I detest him,' she answered with a

smile ; then looking deep into my eye and reading my every thought she said with serious steadfastness, 'I will never marry that man as long as I live.' I raised her hand to my lips, pressed it, and exclaimed, 'I will never marry any one—but you,' and alarmed at my unpremeditated words, I rushed from the room.

"As I entered the street I met the Count. In the sudden revulsion of feeling at the sight of him and the supercilious smile that curled his lip, I was illy prepared for the sneering remark that he delivered with his politest bow. 'The American gentleman calls on the young lady very often.' 'What business is that of yours?' I could only reply, with a look of mingled contempt and hatred. 'Pardon me,' he replied, still with mock politeness, 'but it is my affair, for the Signora is my promised bride.'

"'You lie, you dastardly villain,' I exclaimed as I hurled him to the ground and rushed away.

"I was too excited to think ; but there came over my mind, with a rush of feeling which nearly unmanned me, the recollection of Mrs. Miller's ambitions, a recent, but now first recalled coolness toward me, and her increased and marked attention

and cordiality toward the Count. Yet I felt sure that her daughter would never listen to the suit of such a villain, for such his very visage declared him to be. I did not then know that virtue is not skilled in reading the emblems of vice.

"I could scarcely control my feelings until the next day, that I might call and ask for an explanation of the Count's words. As soon as I could do so with propriety, I called on Mrs. Miller. The mother received me with an air which said plainly that I was unwelcome. In answer to my anxious inquiries for her daughter, she informed me that she was indisposed; that they were much annoyed by my meeting with the Count. I saw that he had been before me, and had already secured her approbation. 'But, madam, will you not allow me to explain? The Count—' 'Ah, pardon me,' she interrupted, 'you must be too much of a gentleman to seek to traduce another.' 'I do not traduce him,' I replied, 'I only wish you to see his character in its true light, and to hear my apologies for my hasty act.' 'Enough,' said she, rising. 'He is at least a gentleman; one whom we are glad and proud to receive.' 'I see, madam, what is his virtue in your eyes,' I answered. 'I will not again invade your

society, but will you be so kind as to tell me if the Count spoke true or false when he claimed your daughter as his fiancée?' 'By what right do you ask this question?' she inquired. Instantly a cloud as of night passed over me. My tongue was motionless. My mind was paralyzed. I stood a moment in confusion, unable to say a word, and mutely retired from the room. I at last found myself in the street walking as in a trance. Had I been dreaming? Was I now in a dreadful delirium? I was aroused by a touch upon my arm, and a boy handed me a delicate, perfumed note. I seized it and read. 'My friend, I must say farewell! Mamma says I must not see you again. We leave Naples to-day. Let us ever remain the best of friends. Good-by.' I tore the paper into shreds and threw it madly from me. Her words stung me deeper than her mother's. We were 'friends'!

"Thus a fair bit of womanhood can ensnare and destroy the heart of man, then trip lightly on and say, 'let us be friends.' Thus a young and beautiful female, all innocence and ignorance, can bewilder and deceive the experienced man of the world. 'She could not have ever loved me,' thought I, 'or she would not now leave me thus.' A woman would

go through fire and water for the man she loves, but this child, at the first opposition, calmly says, 'good-by,' as after only a casual meeting on a summer afternoon. I was angry; too deeply wounded in my self-respect to think calmly. I laid all manner of accusations at the door of my deceiver, yet all my chivalry rose at the thought of her being sacrificed to that villain on the altar of a vain mother's ambition. I determined to follow them and prevent that, and so prove at least 'a friend.' I learned that they had gone to Rome. Thither I followed, but with bitter apprehension when I learned that the Count had accompanied them. Here it was several days before I could find their residence. I was about despairing, when I met my friend the surgeon, from whom I had parted in Naples. 'Ah, so glad to see you,' he exclaimed. 'Have you recovered from that old wound yet? Convalescing, perhaps?' I see I must apply a cicatrizer,—it is the only sure and speedy cure. She is married—to an Italian Count. Married him for his title. Married her for her money. She has a fool for a husband. He has a fool for a wife. Wish them much joy, and congratulate yourself on a happy escape. What! does it burn so deeply?' he exclaimed, as he saw my

pallid face. 'Here, take a stimulant, quick'; and he took me into the nearest café and gave me a glass of brandy, which I swallowed as water. I was walking on red hot plowshares. My heart was as a burning lake. But time at length cooled it, though for many years it was as the streams of lava which flow down the ragged sides of old Vesuvius. The surface of the molten mass may be cold and black, but beneath still glow the fatal fires."

"And what of the fair deceiver of this guileless youth?" I asked.

"I have never seen or heard of her since," replied Ag., with a studied tone of indifference which he had evidently been years in acquiring. "I rushed into travel and excitement in order to be freed if possible from my memory, and to shake off the man who had been so demented and disgraced. But everywhere I dragged the lengthening chain, and even yet I sometimes feel the old manacles burn into my flesh." This was said with a gesture as if shaking a fetter from his hands.

"I think," said my wife with deep, sympathetic cheerfulness, "I could give you a better prescription. Beecher says: 'The best cure for a wounded heart is another sick heart to poultice it with.'"

"It comes too late," said Ag.; "I have repealed that article in my constitution and retain only a substitute sufficient to keep up the form of existence."

"So have said many men as strong as you," continued she, "but man's science has not yet constructed a bomb-proof vault sufficiently deep and strong to ward off the shafts of love. For strongest men are weakest on the side whence came the woman rib."

"And strongest," I added, "when the rib is properly replaced. I know that I should have succumbed long since to the buffetings of fate without that support. It is a mystery to me how a single man can survive the 'slings and arrows of outrageous fortune' without the protecting shield of woman's love."

"Better," replied he, "than if handicapped with a millstone hung about his neck in the form of a weak and foolish wife. Man's labor is surely vain, if he find not his reward in his home. No one more admires domestic life than the bachelor; but I have long since lost my chance in the lottery. I staked all and drew a blank."

"While there is life there is hope, you know," said my wife gayly, wishing to divert her brother from his gloomy reflections. "The prizes are not

all drawn yet, and who knows but there is one reserved for you."

"When it comes, I shall appreciate it," said he ; "but if never, you know I have the next best gift of the gods, the best sister in the world. That boy, that man, is already armed and capped for the conflict who has a true, loving sister. Well may the gods envy him who has, besides, a faithful wife ; but he is a prince indeed, who wears the triple crown of mother, sister, wife."

CHAPTER VIII.

A MEETING AND A PARTING.

AFTER the revealing of the hidden chapter in Uncle Ag.'s life, so unexpectedly disclosed, no further reference was made to the subject by him; but it made a deep impression upon my wife.

"I do so wish," said she, "that Ag. might find the blessing he deserves and would so richly prize—a good, true wife. But such are so rare and he is so hard and cynical, on the surface, that I fear the rich soil underneath will never again be exposed to the warm sun of love, that the sweet seeds of sentiment may ripen into the golden fruit of conjugal happiness."

"Perhaps the fair school-teacher might awaken his interest if they could meet," I suggested. "But he seems to have no interest, and there is no prospect of their meeting."

I was discouraged. But at this point the irrepressible boy appeared again.

"Uncle Ag.," exclaimed Bob, "when are you

going to take me to the circus? You promised, you know."

"Did I? Then I must do so."

"And you promised to take me to the fair," added Willie.

"True. Then I will solve the difficulty, not by dividing the prize, as they do in school; but I will take you both to the circus, then both to the fair, if you want to go."

This arrangement proved satisfactory as to the circus, but Bob, after his interview with the wonders of the circus and the tattooed man, had no desire for the less striking attractions of the hospital fair. So Uncle Ag. went, accompanied only by Willie. They wandered about the huge building, amid the gay people: the boy with the quiet, well-bred interest of the city boy, accustomed to a constant succession of new scenes; the man with the unoccupied air of a man of the world, suffering himself to be bored for the pleasure of his younger companion; not that Ag. did not know how to enter into all the feelings and interests of the boy, but he was unconsciously preoccupied.

"See, Uncle Ag.," exclaimed Willie, suddenly calling the attention of his abstracted companion,

"there is the picture our teacher told us about. That is Vesuvius with the smoke coming out of the top."

"Ah! has the old reprobate taken to smoking again?" said Ag., bantering the boy. "That is a harmless way of letting off his inward rage. Smoking is man's vent also for his feelings. Beware of the man who does n't smoke. He is 'full of tréasons, plots, and stratagems.' But it does not always suffice. Sometimes, like the burning mountain, he breaks forth in streams of molten madness, destroying all on whom they fall, scarring his breast forever, and leaving only dust and ashes in their course."

"Did you ever see Vesuvius, Uncle Ag.?" inquired Willie.

"Yes, I believe so, about a thousand years ago—when I was younger than I am now."

"My—what an old man!" exclaimed the boy. "That beats Methuselah; you ought to join the museum."

"And I had an adventure there with brigands, and lost all my baggage, including my heart and my head."

"Oh, how? Tell all about it."

"I was robbed of my heart by two bright eyes, and lost my head in following it."

"And did you find them again?"

"Yes, the head much damaged, but not the other piece. In fact, I found I did not need it; I could live just as well without it, and not be in danger of losing it again."

"What a queer man!" exclaimed the lad, entering into the spirit of his uncle's words. "Perhaps you are like the giant in the story, who picked up his head which had been cut off and put it on wrong side in front, so that ever after he went backward."

"Yes, I have seen such men myself; the world is full of them."

"There she is!" suddenly exclaimed Willie; "right by the picture. Her head just covers the top of Vesuvius."

"Who?" asked Ag., looking in the direction pointed out.

"Our teacher. She sees us." At this instant the lady turned and recognized Willie, who ran up to her with an ardent greeting, which was warmly returned, and then ran to bring up his escort. "Miss Diana, this is my Uncle Ag." The children had been accustomed in school to call her by this name.

"Uncle Ag." continued he in a breath, giving them only time to bow, "is the most wonderful man in the world. He is a thousand years old. His head is turned. He has n't any heart; he lost it on the mountain there"—"Is n't she beautiful?" he continued in an audible undertone to his uncle. "She is an angel, if you don't see her wings."

Neither knew what to say after such an introduction, in which each learned every thing except the other's name. For a moment they stood speechless while their eyes met with a gaze that sought to pierce to the very soul beneath. Her face for a moment glowed as with a rush of fire, and the next was covered with snow, while she clasped her hand to her heart as if it were breaking through its walls. He for a moment lost sight of all but those eyes, into which he gazed, as if to read her heart, while the room began to turn around him, and a strange sound was in his ears. As thus they stood, the very walls of the building seemed to tremble and totter. There was a sudden cry of terror, a shout of danger, a rush of feet, a terrific crash, and all was darkness and dismay. Ag., who in the instant of danger recovered all his powers, clasped Willie with one strong hand and threw his broad shoulder over the

sinking form of the lady. In a moment they were all borne to the earth beneath the falling timbers of the roof. As soon as he could speak, Ag. called on his companions. A faint voice from Willie answered: "I 'm safe, but can't get out." But no response came from the lady. All was still, except the muffled screams and groans of the wounded and dying, and voices of those who were now striving to rescue them. Ag. found himself hemmed in by the timbers, and almost crushed by the weight which he strove to uphold from the prostrate, deathlike form of the lady. Ages of agony he lived in those brief moments while he struggled to rescue his fair companion, entranced by the look and the mystery of that face, which might, even at that moment, be lying pale in death, snatched from his sight at the instant of recognition. At length relief reached them. Willie was taken out first, nearly smothered in the dust, but uninjured. Ag. would not move until his charge was cared for and removed, still lifeless, to a carriage. Then he rushed to look again upon that face, but could see only the pale features partly concealed by the loosened coils of gold brown hair, and tinged by a tiny purple stream which trickled over the marble temple. "You are injured,

sir," spoke a voice as the carriage was driven away, and then he first saw that his left arm hung powerless by his side.

"Who was that lady?" he eagerly inquired; but the gentleman could not inform him. In bewilderment and pain he at length reached home. But little sleep came to him or any of the family that night. Willie was too full of his accounts of the dreadful accident, with variations, to say any thing about the meeting of his uncle and the teacher. Ag. kept his thoughts to himself, whatever they were, but evinced an uncontrollable impatience of all questions, and anxiety for the morning, which, under the circumstances, seemed inexplicable. When morning came he sent in eager haste for the first morning paper, which, by the magic art of printing and the omnipresent reporter, contained a full and graphic account of the event of a few hours before. With eager glance he scanned the names of the killed, and then with a sigh of relief turned to those of the injured. There he read: "Slightly injured, Miss Diana Miller." "*Miss Diana Miller,*" he repeated with a strange emphasis, while his voice grew husky and died in his throat. Long he sat gazing in blank reverie upon the page before him,

until aroused by my early and anxious inquiries as to his injuries. His only reply was to point to that name in the paper and say, "What can this mean?"

"Only," said I, looking it over, "that you have made a greater mistake, all these years, than I supposed. Go and claim the fortune which awaits you, if yet it be yours; and thank God that your folly in abandoning this pearl has not lost it forever."

He needed no second suggestion. Without mentioning the subject to my wife, he slipped from the house at the first opportunity and hurried down the street. Soon he returned saying: "I could not see her, but I learned that she is indeed the pearl of my former experience. I sent up my card with some flowers and inquiries as to her condition, and received this little note in answer. 'My friend, my friend forever. You have again saved me. My heart thanks you. My lips, I trust, in a few days may do so. Till then, yours as ever, D. M.' As ever; as ever," he repeated, "what can be more encouraging than that?"

"What is encouraging," asked my wife, hearing the last words.

"Ag. is coming to his senses," I replied; "he has found his head and is in a fair way to recover his heart," and I told the news.

"We shall expect a speedy recovery now," said she, "under the application of that poultice."

A few days later Ag. called upon the lady. The particulars of that meeting he did not divulge, but he discussed at considerable length the foolishness of a man in a fit of jealousy.

"She did not marry the Count," said he, "and could not be persuaded to do so by her mother. Her mother had induced her to write me the note of farewell, which she supposed would be for only a few days. Her mother, at last discovering the true character of the Count, was willing to receive me, but I, the idiot, was roaming in the South Pacific, putting the round of the world between myself and happiness. Thus ten years were lost out of our lives. She had long since come to believe me dead; 'for if not,' she said, 'she knew I would find her.' What a pang of self-condemnation shot through my craven heart at those words. No other passion had taken possession of her heart, though she had many suitors. She had too much sense to be betrayed into the modern madness of marrying first and 'learning to love' afterward. They spent several years in Europe and then returned to this city. Soon after, her father died. On examination

of his affairs, he was found to be insolvent. Her mother, instead of being a support, lost all her energy and health, and became a burden. An opportunity offering of entering the public school, she did so, where she is now supporting herself and mother. But she shall not stay there long," he concluded.

"I suppose," said my wife, "that the knight-errant will now appear to rescue the distressed maiden."

"Which in these degenerate days," I added, "he can only do by marrying her."

"I have not thought of the future," said he. "I am too happy to think."

"You will let us see our future sister soon, I hope," said my wife.

"I hope so," said he.

"She is an angel after all, is n't she?" asked Willie.

"I will admit that she is very like an angel," said Ag.

"Is she good enough to eat?" added Bob.

Ag. did not seem to relish this remark, but he offered to take the boys to all the circuses and fairs which they might wish to see for the remainder of their natural lives.

After a few days Willie's teacher was again in her class-room, but the weary, hopeless look had disappeared from her face. She had not wholly recovered from the effects of the accident, still there appeared more often a suffused glow in her pale cheek and an added sweetness to her voice, which told of the magic transformations of hope and love. To Willie she was even kinder and more tender than before, for she could but look upon him as the innocent messenger of love and happiness. Now love threw its halo over all the dull round of her daily task. It lightened her weary step when she left the room, and made it more brisk and buoyant when she entered in the morning, to take up the daily routine, turning the wheel of Ixion, ever beginning and ending at the same place; rolling the stone of Sisyphus up the hill of daily duties, only to find it at the base again each morning. But now, love lent her wings to rise above these cares, and hope gave her strength to bear gladly every burden.

"Uncle Ag.," said Willie one day, soon after her return, "what do you think our teacher did to-day?"

"Punished you, perhaps," was the reply, "for introducing me to her in such an original manner."

"No, she did n't," replied the boy. "She kissed me. It was when I gave her your note and the flowers that you sent her."

"Ah! love does not need to go to school, I see," said I. "He is the only child that knows its lesson by instinct, and speaks a tongue everywhere understood. He springs, like Minerva, full-armed and equipped, not from the head of Jupiter, but from the heart of man. He is reported to be always young; but I think I have heard something recently about his growing rapidly old and falling into a premature grave," I continued, with a look at Ag.

"Those were formerly the sentiments of 'yours truly,'" replied he, "but I hope I am not such a fool as to be always consistent. I have lived and learned since I uttered those opinions."

"In the school of love, I suppose," said I; "none are so old but they can learn of that young teacher. Love and experience—the winsome boy and the stern old dame with the rod,—these are the true teachers. All others are but pretenders. I see you are in a fair way to acquire a liberal education."

"Our teacher has no rod, I am sure," said Willie.

"She rules by love, I suppose," said I.

"And punishes with a kiss," said Ag., with a look at Willie.

"You would better not come," replied the boy, "or she might punish you."

Ag. had no more to say on that subject.

Love and reason certainly were not the prevailing principles in the school in which Miss Miller was employed. A few days after Willie's report, she was again criticised for the lack of order in her room. But she did not receive the criticism with the expected meekness.

"Order?" she asked. "What would you have, the order of life, or the order of death? Wherever there are life and growth there are activity and motion; not discord but harmony. Listen to the music of the rustling grass as the wind sweeps it into waves, the murmur of the leaves, the singing of the birds. The sound you hear is the murmur of happy voices; the quick, spontaneous word of question or reply. It is not disorder. Even the clatter of a cotton-mill is musical, for it speaks of life, activity, utility. Try to put yourself in the place of these children, Mr. Principal. Would it be an easy matter for you to remain in one seat, in one position, under strict surveillance, for one hour?"

"I recognize these evils," he replied; "many of the principals do, but we are powerless to

remedy them. We do not make these rules, and dare not risk losing our positions by attempting to reform them."

"And meantime the children suffer, while you hold your positions," replied she, with indignation.

"Who makes these iron rules?"

"The Board of Education," he replied.

"Who makes the Board of Education?"

"The Mayor and Board of Aldermen."

"Who makes them?"

"The politicians; and they can unmake also," he continued. "I see that the superintendent of one of the best schools in the country has recently been dismissed. Every man who superintends schools is as likely to be turned out as a postmaster. A few towns elect good men to their school Boards, but the majority are entirely unfit. They begin to bully the school principal or superintendent as soon as they get into office. Every superintendent must be ready to go when the ward politician says, 'march.'"

"But this is useless discussion," he concluded.

"I fear that you will not hold your position much longer, unless you modify your views and practices."

"Nor do I desire to do so," was her reply. "My

heart aches for the poor children thus crushed between the millstones of an iron system and heartless routinism ; but as for me, you can fill my position at your pleasure."

Thus ended Miss Miller's connection with the public school. When it became known that she was soon to go, there was great sorrow among the children, for they had come to recognize the tokens of love and genuine kindness as they always do, and from too familiar experience with school-room instructors they feared a change, which could bring them no good. To another class the news brought only joy. It was the great army of applicants which stands besieging the doors of every occupation which offers a "position," and especially the teacher's, where qualification and preparation are the least essential.

"But I must live," said one of this class to a practical business man. "The necessity for that is not so apparent as it may seem to you," was the stern reply, which might apply with equal force to many of those holding or seeking positions in our schools.

Work or starve is the law of life. The world owes no man any thing, but him who holds its receipt for

services rendered. There are in ~~any~~ places; but still the great army of applicants moves on, increasing as it goes, and sad as it is, many of the recruits come from the common schools. Their teaching and influence are away from the direction of honest manual labor, and foster the popular desire to find a way to live without work.

A school commissioner in a recent report says:

"It is a fact that a large majority of the children in our schools must, if they attain a livelihood, secure it by manual labor. It is also a noticeable fact, that the more completely they traverse the courses of study laid down for them, the less inclined they are to enter any of the trades or engage in any manual labor, and are restless, are unsatisfied with any thing but a professional or business life. Hence the professions and clerkships grow more crowded each day, and native-born workmen in our shops and factories grow scarce, while starving lawyers, doctors, and book-keepers rapidly increase in number.

"The cause of this state of things is not that we give too much literary education, but that we give too little industrial. After our boys have sat behind a desk, pen in hand, following out our educational code until they are sixteen years old, we find

they have lost their inclination for manual labor, and prefer to starve on the pittance of a clerk or book-keeper, rather than live on the less exacting, but more ennobling, remunerative labor of their hands."

The applicants for Miss Miller's place were examined in reading, writing, arithmetic, and geography; but not in respect to their ability or training for the occupation of teaching. Their certificates also bore a testimonial of "good moral character," as to which no examination was made.

One of these applicants adopted the shrewd device of hiring a carriage and persuading all her friends to call on the trustee and urge her appointment; which scheme proved successful. She secured the "position," but she filled it in a manner far different from that of her gentle predecessor, which proved the source of much trouble to our young friends as well as others.

CHAPTER IX.

A LETTER AND AN EVENT.

A FEW weeks after Tom's departure for college, I received the following letter :

"My dear Pater."

("Pater!" said I. "Has the boy begun to forget his native tongue so soon? Does he imagine that finding a new name for a thing has increased his stock of knowledge? As if a spade in Latin were any thing but a tool for digging dirt. Thus the professors teach us names and delude us with the idea that we have learned something, while they have but concealed their ignorance under a cloud of words. Such is science. So I am a pater. Let us proceed.")

"My dear Pater: I arrived here safe and sound, with no greater mishap than the loss of my watch, which was stolen from me on the boat."

("Lesson 1st: caution. Beware of pickpockets. Not only those who rob you of your time-piece, but of what is much more valuable—your time ;

who steal your labor, reputation, patience, and peace of mind. You may find your watch, but these can never be recovered.")

"I presume I shall be obliged to do without one, at least until the holidays, when I hope Santa Claus or some other good genius will replace it."

("Lesson 2d. Depend upon yourself. Don't look for any good genii but those you can compel by the magic 'open sesame' of labor and patience. You can claim something from the world when you have done it a service and hold its note 'for value received.' ")

"It will be difficult for me to do without it and be prompt at all my recitations."

("Lesson 3d. Be your own watch. Be punctual. Be not a thief of others' time. For he who steals my purse, steals trash; but he who robs me of my time, robs me of that which enriches him not and leaves me poor indeed.")

"I, with some other freshmen, was met at the boat by a deputation from different clubs and secret societies, and for a few weeks we were diligently 'cultivated,' as it is called, by the rival societies. We were invited to dinners, walks, and rides, and received most marked attentions from upper-class

men—until we were initiated. Then we were most hastily and uncereemoniously dropped. The fall of Woolsey was nothing to it. Seniors and Juniors were suddenly oblivious of our existence, while the dreaded Sophomore was seen at every corner meditating mischief, and our hearts sank at every knock at the door, which we feared was that of the masked kuklux or midnight serenader. Even the professors seemed to look upon us with a bland indifference, as we took up the old round of lessons where the preceding class had dropped it, to be rung again through the changes of another year, while they seemed to join in the conspiracy to make the Freshman know his place and feel his insignificance. But the cup of my humility was full, when at a meeting of the society an election of officers was called. I expected to be made at least president or secretary, but was a little surprised to find myself, with two or three other Freshmen, unanimously elected as a committee on preparations. I felt greatly honored, until, on inquiring as to the duties of that committee, I learned that it was to open the hall, sweep, dust, and wait upon the upper-class men generally. Even the urchins on the street call us freshy, and the dogs bestow upon us a minatory bark.

"We are hard at work, 'making marks,' for upon our standing at the close of the first term depends our relative positions in the class, as well as in the estimation of the professors. The Greek professor is looked upon with awe when he quotes from the grammar, and gives page and paragraph from memory. He is fond of his joke, and we all sit trembling for fear we will be the next victim. But once we got even with him. The whole class agreed not to laugh at his next joke! He soon brought out one of his best—and oldest; but not a wrinkle appeared on our solemn countenances, while his self-satisfied smile soon died away in sickly surprise and mortification.

"The upper-class men often ask us if we have had a certain joke or illustration yet, as it is about time for it in the regular course. One student so surprised the professor by his prompt answer to his standing illustration, that he asked the student how he knew. 'I heard that you would ask that question soon,' he replied, 'and prepared for it.' That question was then shelved. It is not for us to aspire to sophomorical dignity—a high hat and cane. One who blossomed out prematurely was nipped early in the bud. He found his hat the next

morning on the top of the liberty pole, and his cane in bits adorning the sophomore's watch-guard.

"I have found one or two friends in my class, with whom I have been out in the beautiful surrounding country walking, and enjoyed it very much. I think I shall be able to pull through, though I have a few conditions, and a 'conditioned' freshman is a pariah here.

"Love to all. Good-by. Your affectionate son,

"TOM."

("Lesson fourth; best of all. 'Know thyself.' Learn your insignificance in the great machine of society, and so be saved later and greater disappointment. He who has learned, as Emerson says, 'to take himself for better or for worse,' and to strive humbly and honestly to make the best of that inseparable companion, has got the lever under this old world, and if he cannot move it, it cannot move him. Learn, my son, to perform your duty in your allotted place, and you will then be prepared 'to pass up' higher. Practise the old German motto, 'Do the next thing'; so will you not be disturbed all your life by the pursuing phantoms of things undone. Having learned yourself, you will know how to value others at their true worth.

Like Aurelius, be not disturbed by what others may do or not do.”)

The letter continued :

“ P. S.—The state of my exchequer is wofully depleted. Will you please send me some money as soon as convenient? I am very short. Hard up, in fact. TOM.”

(“ Stern necessity, I see, brings him down to plain Anglo-Saxon. Keep on, my boy ; you are learning your littleness, and now beginning to grow ; finding out your deficiencies and gaining strength ; seeing your ignorance through the right end of the telescope, and so beginning to discover the unknown worlds of thought and fact yet to be explored.”)

This was Tom’s letter, with my mental comments and reply. I was particularly anxious as to the beginning which Tom should make in college, and the associations he should form, knowing that in forming new relations one is readily assigned the position which he at first assumes, which it is much easier to maintain than to achieve.

But Tom and his interests were soon driven out of my mind for a time, by an event which, however often it may occur, is the great event in every household. Though long expected, it is most un-

expected when it comes. It may add another jewel to the family coronet, or lose forever the golden clasp which binds them all in one. The uncertainty of certainty, the hope, the fear, all make the heart stand still in the presence of the mighty miracle and mystery of life.

Swiftly and silently comes the birth-angel, haply if not followed by the angel of death, bearing in his arms the little shivering form, chilled by the first touch of the air of this cold world, unsealing at its touch the fountains of domestic joy, leaping into the arena of life with a cry of defiance to all the unseen enemies that range around. Thus came the hour to us. There was a sudden cry by night; the hurrying of anxious feet; the awed whispering, the solemn silence within the closed chamber where love and life wrestle with pain and death, until is heard the cry of victory, the voice of welcome, while love lies pale in the weakness of its ecstasy of giving its greatest gift to man.

The careless passer-by perchance heard a new voice in the air, but could not know the new happiness which had descended upon that household.

The smile of proud and secret possession illumines every face.

"Evidently a healthy child with good, sound lungs," says the doctor, at one of the intervals of their exercise.

"A dear little puggy mug of a boy, with a little dot of a nose, just like his papa, and deep blue eyes, like his mamma," says nurse.

"Mother's precious little baby," says mamma, as she clasps the newest, best, only baby to her breast.

"It seems to be well formed and perfect and looks like its mother," says papa, as he bends tenderly over them.

"What a funny baby," says Willie. "It has n't any hair. Did the doctor take it to the barber to get its hair cut before he brought it? I will never speak to him again, because he did n't put teeth in our baby."

"It looks just like a snake," said Harry, looking at its somewhat mottled features. Bob was not much interested in the stranger. His mind was intent upon a certain toy-engine which he hoped Santa Claus would soon bring.

"What do you think you have now?" I asked him. "You have a little baby brother."

"Why did n't you get me a steam-engine?" was the boy's practical reply.

After a few days, Uncle Ag. was allowed to enter the court of their majesties, King Baby and Queen Mamma, and to pay his respects.

"Another mouth to feed," said he.

"Another arrow in my quiver," she.

"Another hostage unto fortune."

"Another anchor to my bark."

"Another bud for which to care."

"Another flower to blossom here."

"This is *the* baby now I suppose," continued he. "There is but one baby in the world at once. However brief his reign, he is supreme until pushed from his stool by a successor. People are never old while there is a baby in the house. This is the fountain of perpetual youth in which we bathe and are young again. By all means let us have all the babies that the gods will bestow."

"Why don't you get a baby, Uncle Ag.?" interrupted Bob.

"I don't know where to get one."

"Oh, yes, down street, at the five-cent counter."

But Uncle Ag. did not conclude to make the investment, notwithstanding the inducements. When the doctor's wife, who was a friend of the family, called, Willie rushed to convey the news.

"We 've got a brand new baby!" but recollecting that the doctor had brought it, gravely added, "but I suppose you have seen it before."

Dr. Draco, our family physician, was one of those rare physicians whose calm, clear tones are at the same time strong and sympathetic, bringing the best of tonic to the sick and hope to the sorrowing. He was also very fond of children and had that true sympathy for them which they so instinctively recognize.

"This morning," said the doctor, "as I was coming here, a strange child in the street ran after me and clasped my hand crying, 'Man, man, don't let that other man hurt me.' The child knew neither of us. I never felt more highly complimented in my life. Child judgments are true, for we all carry our records in our faces. Character is stamped there, however much we may seek to disguise it. The soul informs the body; it works over, so to speak, the crude material in which it is contained, and unconsciously moulds it to its own expression. Not only the inner dress, the body, but also the outer dress, carriage and gesture, all conform to the character of the mind within, and even the outermost dress, the house, the books, the furniture, and

the grounds, wear the impress of the same prevailing spirit. The head, the hair and eyes, the voice and temperament, the handwriting and the hand, all show the soul. Not they make it, but it makes them. Show me the house you live in, and I will tell you what you are. Now this child," he continued, placing his hand upon the head of little Harry, "has a large brain and active temperament. He is healthy as yet, because you have wisely restrained his mental activity and developed his body. The brain, in many children, grows more rapidly than the body, and, unless restrained, at the expense of the body. Be in no haste to send him to school. For children of his age, school is a hot-bed of mental and physical disease. He has already acquired the best part of an education, for he has learned how to use his eyes and ears, to draw comparisons and connect ideas and objects by association. He has now only to apply them to the objects around him in order to acquire a 'liberal education.' But, after all how little can be taken in from without! All education is from within, only a drawing out of the faculties and functions of the mind. The doors of the mind open outward and knowledge cannot be forced in from without."

"I am in despair," said I, "as to the education of Harry. He is now of the school age, but I don't know where to send him."

"If educators," continued Dr. Draco, "would learn to begin their work at the right end, that is, with the child, we might hope for something better; but instead, they begin with the huge mountain of accumulated knowledge — so-called science,—and as the mountain won't come to the child, they bring the child to the mountain. They say, here are the facts and here is the child; all we have to do is to open its mouth like a sack and stuff it in. But the result is indigestion, instead of education; for the mind will not receive and assimilate what it does not take willingly. Stuffing is not training."

"But you cannot make teachers believe that," said I.

"All education," continued the doctor, "begins at the fingers' ends; that is, with the five senses—the doors of the mind. How eager is the young soul to rush out into the beautiful world prepared for its development and delight. In the first five years of a child's life it acquires more knowledge than in any subsequent ten. The child is happy, *for it* is learning in the natural way. As the scien-

tists say, he is in harmony with his environment. But when he is sent to school all is changed. Curiosity is checked. Its activity is repressed, and happiness disappears. When educators learn to follow the methods of nature, then will be discovered the royal road to learning."

"May it be found in my day, that my children may share its blessings!" was my earnest reply.

CHAPTER X.

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS.

A FEW weeks after the events of the last chapter, Tom and Teazel came home for the holidays.

Blessings on the man who invented Christmas; not the Saturnalia of the Romans, the Carnival of their successors, nor the revelries of the New Year, but the Christian festival of giving, in token of the good gifts bestowed by the Father of all.

The pleasure of anticipation is excelled only by that of preparation and surprise.

The "Merry Christmas" and "Happy New Year" heard in the marts of trade and on the streets, as well as in the calm precincts of home; the beautiful cards falling everywhere like flakes of snow, with words of greeting; the Knickerbocker custom of New Year's calls and well-wishing,—all serve to weld the bonds of friendship, while the flowers of love, which have lain hidden under the foliage of summer, blossom brightest amid the snows of December.

The holiday week is the great objective point of the year. It breaks the dull level of labor and care by the green summit of Christmas, whence we descend into the dismal vale of January bills. But this mount of hope intervenes in the view of the business man, with its prospects of good "holiday trade" coming at a time which would otherwise be the dullest of the year, and enables him to bridge over the dreaded chasm of January. It calls every mind from care and toil to at least a brief respite of peace and joy. My own business at this time was very exacting and caused me great anxiety and apprehension; yet, for one day at least, I determined to throw it off and give the children a happy holiday, with no thought of the rough channels of business through which come the currents which warm and beautify the home and supply the means of giving. I regard money spent for gifts as one of the best investments a man can make. It returns a hundred per cent. a year, and is one of the safest that can be made; neither panics nor failures can depreciate or destroy it. I make it a point every Christmas to place some of my funds in this safe deposit vault, secured by love against all contingencies and calamities, and insured against all loss,

including "war and invasion." Consequently we were all made happy. Tom received the long-desired watch, with the inscription, "Keep your watch and it will keep time." Teazel received the painted plaques which she had admired and a book of instruction in art decoration. Willie was made happy by a new case in which to keep his "bugs," and some books of travel, adventure, and battle, which delighted his martial mind. Bob received the coveted steam-engine, which could be taken apart and reconstructed in order to satisfy the boyish desire to see the inside of every thing, from a circus tent to a hand-organ. Harry, soon after the advent of Santa Claus, was seen sitting like Van Amberg in the midst of his animals and sighing for more beasts to conquer. Lions, tigers, elephants, and camels were his daily companions, while tales of good little wolves and naughty bears were a never-failing resource by which to calm him to sleep or divert him from mischief. They were literally his daily food, for whole menageries of crackers and arks of animals daily disappeared before him.

Uncle Ag. was strongly suspected of being a secret accomplice of Santa Claus in his midnight burglaries, not for carrying off valuables, but for bring-

ing them in. Mamma received the promised Persian rug, and a beautiful set of cameos, purchased when he was in Naples. They were originally intended to adorn another fair one, for whom was now purchased a brilliant diamond ring.

What could love do without jewels? They have been his language from the time of the savage, who told his passion in bits of shells and shining stones, to the latest lover who can find complete expression of his love only in the condensed costliness, the clear-cut crystallineness, and prismatic splendors of the many-faceted diamond. My wife also received many articles of household adornment and comfort, including easy chairs, pictures, and books. How convenient it is for a man to be able to purchase coveted luxuries under pretext of presenting them to his wife! "It is only a little compliment to my wife," as a millionaire said when he built his marble mansion on Fifth Avenue. Ag. was remembered by all. I received another sample of Teazel's art work in a red Turkish smoking-cap, ornamented with little imps in yellow silk, dancing about the border; a whole cabinet of horrors painted upon Japanese plates, for my study; a paper weight of a mummy's hand set in ebony and gold; and for an inkstand,

an ivory skull trepanned at the top for taking out ink. Perhaps this last, however, was intended as a gentle satire upon those writers who mistake ink for brains. My daughter's presents were appreciated as the tokens of her affection, while I deplored her lack of taste, that, like many others who call themselves artists, she was unable to distinguish between the beautiful and the ugly. Such art is not of a much higher order than that piety which takes the witch-expelling horseshoe—relic of the superstition of our fathers, which we should gladly forget—as its emblem of “Merry Christmas,” or “He is Risen,” decked in Easter flowers.

Among all our gifts, it was agreed that mamma had given the best in the dear Christmas baby. For what is Christmas but the apotheosis of babyhood ; bringing all to bow before the cradle with gifts and adoration, turning the art and worship of nations to the Mother and the Child.

After all the gifts and the baby had been fully discussed, and the greetings to the guests, Tom and Teazel, were over, Ag. asked Tom how he was coming on at college.

“First-rate,” replied he ; “I can row 36 strokes

a minute, and I hope before I finish my college course to be able to row 42. I have increased my biceps muscle from $10\frac{3}{4}$ to nearly 12 inches. I am pitcher in our class nine, anchor man in the tug of war, and bow oarsman in our boat crew. I mean before I graduate to be in the college six."

"Graduate! Where?" asked Ag. in apparent surprise.

"From college, to be sure," replied Tom.

"Excuse me," said Ag. "I thought perhaps that you were in a gymnasium. Do you study any there?"

"Oh! yes, when we get time; but it won't do to be seen studying too much; one who studies all the time is called a dig. A popular man must take part in the college sports."

"This is an age of improvement truly," said I. "I now see how my education has been neglected. I know nothing about boating or base ball. I fear I could not even enter college in those branches. When I went to college, I tried to lead my class, or at least be among the 'honor men,' but now I see the highest honor is to be in the college crew. Ag., you and I will have to begin our education over again."

"I fear so," said he. "But my case is not quite so bad as yours. I learned some of those arts when I was a boy, though I ran away from school to do it. But pulling the captain's gig until my hands were blistered and my back ready to break, I did not consider particularly fine sport. I thought it very hard work, but work becomes genteel sport when it accomplishes no useful end, like chasing the wild anise-seed bag or driving a coach. This is another modern discovery. If the race of life is to be won by the heels, Tom seems to be in good training."

"Yes," said I. "He is doing so well that I think he will finish the course in a few months more. If he does not bring back a sheepskin, he will at least have a good calf."

Tom did not exactly relish this turn to the conversation, but he remarked: "The Greeks, you know, cultivated their bodies as well as their minds, and so developed the highest condition of both. *Sana mens in corpore sano* is our motto."

"Ah! that is very well," said I, "but I had not heard any thing about the cultivation of the mind before. I have noticed, however, that the most noted athletes, pedestrians, etc., have very little mind to cultivate, either sane or insane."

"Perhaps the reason why we hear so much more of the athletic than of the intellectual exercises at college," suggested Ag., is because of the competitions and natural interest connected with them, which enlist so strongly, youthful energies. If more of this spirit and enthusiasm could be thrown into the studies of school and college, it would be much better for all concerned. We do well what interests us. Young people, to whom all things are new, can be interested in whatever is worthy their attention. If the college studies are worth pursuing, they can be made interesting."

"Probably, in due time," I added, "muscular and mental development will assume their proper balance, between the pale and sickly student of former days and the racing athlete of the present. Meantime, Tom, don't forget that the *corpore sano* is of little worth without the *sana mens*."

"Now, Teazel," asked Uncle Ag., "will you tell us how you like your school?"

"Oh, it 's perfectly splendid ; but it is awfully queer!" replied she, in choice, boarding-school English. "The place itself is queer. As you drive up to the gate, you see what appears to be the wall of an old tower in ruins, like some of the old abbeys

and castles in Europe, but when you enter the door, you perceive that it is only a wall in imitation of a ruin."

"I have travelled a good deal," exclaimed Ag., "but I never before heard of an imitation ruin. That must be peculiarly an American product. In our haste to shuffle off our embarrassing newness, we pull down our genuine ruins and relics, and build imitations. Are there any other imitations at your school?"

"Oh, yes, uncle," replied Teazel. "Every thing is in imitation of something foreign or antique, including the principal himself. He looks very solemn and severe in public, and every thing is conducted in a very high-toned and aristocratic manner. He wears immense gold bowed spectacles, which he takes off when he wants to see, and they say he wears a wig of gray hair, to make him look venerable, but he is not very much venerated behind the scenes. The power behind the throne is his wife, a lively little lady who always calls him Doctor before us girls, and is very obsequious to him, but some of the girls say they have heard her call him Pop in private. But she is a greater imitation than he. Her special pride is her antique furniture. One

day she invited us into the museum to see her 'antics.' We saw them, but almost burst our buttons off in trying to keep sober. 'Antics' is her appellation among ourselves, but 'Aunty' to her. She has been in Europe and is forever telling us about it. Once we asked her, for fun, if she had seen the Coliseum. 'Yes,' she replied, 'I brought it home with me.' We were in amazement until she took us to the museum again and showed us a model of Trajan's Column."

"It was too much, I suppose," said Ag., "for her to carry Trajan's Column and the Coliseum in her head at the same time, without confusion. What do you study there?"

"Oh, every thing! French, Evidences of Christianity, Mythology, Moral Science, Manners, Music, and Analogy of Religion; Pastel-painting, Monochromatics, Logic, Ethics, Æsthetics, and all the other Tics; Archæology, Ornithology, Geology, and all the Ologies. I can't tell them all, but I know they have long names and big books that give us all the exercise we want in carrying them about. But we hardly ever look into them. Our teacher, a superannuated pastor, whose flock has run away from him, sometimes questions us, always beginning

at the same place in the class and asking the questions in order from the book, so we each pick out our question and are always prepared with the answer. After a while, he was informed of our practice and he determined to stop it. So he gravely informed us one morning, that he had discovered our custom, and to avoid it in future, he should begin his questions at the *other end of the class*.

“ Every thing is very stately and imposing in public. The furniture is of imitation Eastlake, Elizabethan, and other old styles, but in our chambers it is real old antediluvian. There we have antics of the genuine sort. I room with Jule Juvenal, and nearly every night we have a caucus in our room, with blankets at the doors and windows to hide the light, while we feast upon the goodies which Jule has bribed the cook to give her, or which her brother Jack has smuggled in. She gives me candies and crackers every night to keep me awake, while she expatiates on the fascinations of the Italian music-teacher. He is the gem of the institution. The girls are all raving about him. He is just from Rome, and is *so* exquisite! He has thrilling black eyes, a love of a mustache, and perfectly stunning

locks of black hair. He has such a languishing look, and charming tenor voice ; he is perfectly elegant.

"He comes up from the city, and sometimes looks rather dissipated ; some of the girls say he drinks, but I don't believe it. It is delightful to hear him sing with the true Italian accent. He is *so* interesting!"

"That may be interesting," suggested Ag, "if you don't fall in love,—with an Italian accent."

"No danger of that, uncle," gayly replied Teazel, throwing her fair arms about his neck and trying to imprint a kiss upon his bearded face. "You dear old bear, what do you know about love? Did you ever know a man to lose his appetite by love?"

"How should I know any thing about it?" responded Ag. "However, I once knew a man who went three days without knowing whether he ate or drank, or slept or walked, and all for love. But, Teazel, beware of coquetry. Beauty is woman's birthright, and she naturally desires to make the most of her inheritance, but if she realized how much more attractive to men of sense are the gifts and graces of the mind, she would not endeavor to embellish it by copying her costumes from the *demi-monde* of Paris. Innocence and

truth, my dear girl, with a warm and loving heart, are what men seek in a wife, while the brilliant belle and keen coquette are left to languish into old maidenhood. Preserve these, and you will ever be a queen over the hearts of men."

"What you say of your school, Teazel," said I, "suggests another question: why should there be such a difference between your education and Tom's? You were brought up together, in the same home; but now he, under the influence of solely masculine companionship, runs all to muscle, while you girls seem to run mostly to nonsense. You seem to need the balance wheel of male society to keep you in your proper orbit, while the boys need the leaven of female influence to prevent them from relapsing into the state of original animalism. 'The Creator made man an animal,' says Hawthorne, 'but the dinner-hour makes him a beast.' Woman only can break the spell of Circe and restore him to his true form. Brawn and brain find their counterpart in the brightness and beauty of women. I confess I cannot see the wisdom of separating the sexes at the very period of formation, when they need each other's influence most."

At this point the conversation was interrupted

by an arrival which we were all ardently expecting. This was Miss Diana, as the boys called her, whom Ag. introduced as his best friend. We were all delighted to see her, and congratulated ourselves on the good genius in the form of Willie which had so strangely reunited the faithful lovers. She seemed even more beautiful and lovely than Willie's description and Ag.'s rhapsodies on his Italian acquaintance had led us to anticipate. The added light of love in her eye and glow of happiness on her cheek increased her charms and restored the animation and vivacity which had first won Ag's affection.

With these, the natural grace and modesty of her manner, the unconscious wit and wisdom of her conversation, increased our admiration. Bob and Willie followed her like faithful hounds, glad of a word or a caress. Harry forgot his animals while he listened to her fairy tales; Teazel was in ecstasies over her beauty, and admired the taste which she did not herself possess; while Tom, in her presence, felt the awkward inferiority of strength before intellect and beauty. I realized also as never before, that, as Mrs. Browning says, "the best thing in the world is something out of it"; that beyond and

above the forces of nature and the genius of man, his conflicts and competitions, there is a finer, higher sense, bestowed upon woman as an inspiration to man through his life of toil.

As for Ag., he, for once, seemed to lose his usual self-possession, and to follow her with his eyes in silent wonder as a creature of another sphere. Such are the mysteries and miracles of love. Soon after her arrival, Bob suddenly exclaimed :

"Have you seen our baby? It is the queerest little thing in the world. It does nothing but double up its little fists and wrinkle its face, and cry if you touch it ; but you may look at it."

"May I?" replied she; "I should be delighted to see the sweet little thing."

And we all marched off to court to pay our homage to the toothless tyrant.

"You may take it," continued Bob, seeing that it did not cry when she touched it, "but you must be very careful and not drop it. It might break; for it is only made of dust, you know, and has n't got hard yet."

"Yes," added Willie, "this morning when Bob saw the servant sweeping, he told her to save the dust, for God wanted it to make more babies of."

"Oh, if babies could only always remain the soft, sweet bits of innocence that they are," exclaimed the teacher, "without growing up strong, rude, wilful boys and girls, how happy mothers might be!"

"Yes," answered mamma. "Yet you know they are but miniatures of ourselves, touched with traits of our ancestors, and while they are so sweet in the unconscious innocence of babyhood, we would not have them always babies. What higher joy than to watch the unfolding of these little buds, the rapid blossoming out of inherited traits and talents which so delight the parents' eye, as we see ourselves living again in our children,—our regenerated selves. This is immortality."

"What a delightful duty, indeed!" responded the young lady, "It is something divine, to be thus aiding in the growth and development of souls. This is my idea of education. All life is education,—the drawing out of the inborn faculties of the mind,—training them for their terrestrial uses and for graduation into the college of the hereafter, there to continue their development forever."

"But many parents," said I, "regard their children only as troublesome encumbrances, or as costly

luxuries, and their education only as a part of their worldly outfit; while many teachers regard themselves as intellectual tailors who, for a price, will furnish any style of 'furnishing' or 'brushing up' that may be required."

"How I would delight to teach," continued our guest, "if I could do so in my own way, following untrammelled the dictates of my own heart. The way to a child's mind is through his affections. It is surprising to see at what an early age he can be influenced by judicious appeals to his reason. The allies that the teacher has in the natural desires and curiosity of young children should make their instruction a labor of pleasure."

"You should have such a school," I remarked.

"I should be glad to be so engaged," said she, "if the way were open."

"That is," said I, "if the inquiring parents and the true teachers could be brought together; but the iron-bound public-school systems, with their political and personal influence, and the commercial competitions of the private schools, stand like a Chinese wall between the children and the teachers."

"I hope," said Ag., with a tender look at his

fiancée, "that she will never go into a school-room again."

"Unless," I added, "it be a school of one; though he has run away, and been expelled, from so many schools, youthful and matrimonial, that I fear it would be a difficult one to manage."

"I am, at least, willing to try it," she replied, with a quick glance of fondness toward him.

"That, I suppose," suggested Willie, "would be a private school, 'very select,' 'strictly limited.'"

"There would always be room for you, my dear boy," said she, placing her hand on his shoulder and a kiss upon his pale, fair brow, as we returned to the parlors.

Thus the delightful day passed, in that free and full expression of thought and feeling which constitutes true conversation, when, along the deep, slender cables of spoken language which bind sea-severed souls, flashes the mysterious interchange of thought, and kindred spirits meet in the vast shadow-land of imagination, that distant isle of the sea to which come unseen barks from every shore. A word! what is it? A breath of air, a faint vibration on the ear; but in it are the issues of life and death.

After a day of unalloyed happiness, Miss Miller

was sitting alone in a reverie of bright anticipations, when Bob, unconscious instrument of envious powers, came and seated himself beside her.

"Miss Diana," said he without preliminary, "are you going to marry Uncle Ag.?"

The gathering shadows concealed her rallying blushes at the abrupt question, which she had hardly dared breathe aloud to herself. But to children, nothing is sacred, nothing secret.

"My dear boy," she replied, in a slightly disconcerted tone, "why do you ask such a question?"

"Because I don't want you to take our Uncle Ag. away."

"Never fear that," she said with relief. "If I should do so, you may come too. You and Willie would always be welcome in my house."

"But I could n't have him to tell us stories nights, and to play games and tricks and have fun."

"You can have all the fun you want," she assured him.

"What are you going to marry Uncle Ag. for?" persisted the boy; so he will give you nice things?"

"No, indeed; but why do you ask such questions?"

"Because Uncle Ag. said you were going to marry

him for a home. That he would keep his promise and you would keep yours ; that 's all."

That was all. The wound was like Mercutio's, "not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door," but it was enough. Her fair head sank upon her bosom, like a lily on which the Eastern blast has blown ; the blood left her cheek, and her heart stood still, while she seemed, like Lucifer, to have fallen from the heights of Heaven to the depths of Tartarus.

Moments passed in silence, broken only by the lively ticking of the French clock on the mantel, unmindful of its moments of misery, while Bob sat in mute astonishment at the change which had come upon his companion. At length she raised her head, and without looking at him, said in a strange, tense tone, slowly and almost sternly :

"Did he say those words?"

"Oh, yes, indeed!" quickly replied the boy, glad to say something. "He said it at table with papa and mamma, when we were all talking about you."

Slowly and sadly she rose from the sofa, told Bob to go to his father, silently entered the hall, and quickly left the house, unobserved except by a servant, to whom she said that she was not well, but would not wait for a carriage.

We were all much distressed and alarmed. Ag. went at once to learn the state of the case, but returned without information, except that she could not see him for several days.

A word had done its work.

CHAPTER XI.

TOM'S EXPERIENCE.

TO many a business man in 187—, the passage from Christmas to New Year's, was like the *descensus Averni*. No one who has not passed through such an experience can have any conception of the strain and torture endured by a business man in financial difficulty. The innumerable, ingenious expedients devised and carried out with infinite pains, in order merely to tide over a day or defer an obligation; the unending care and anxiety, the morning apprehension, the evening weariness, the mid-day rush upon the street, the anxious increasing haste as it nears the fateful hour of three, with the Wellingtonian sigh for night or Blucher, lest he meet defeat in the hopeless gulf of protest. It is not the mere loss of money which turns the hair and furrows the brow of the business man. That may be recovered; but reputation, standing, credit, lost, are like a woman's honor to redeem. What sadder sight, than to see, cast up along the shores

of our commercial streams, the wrecks of men formerly of wealth and power, now forgotten or forced to grind in the mills of their rivals?

Such was the prospect which forced itself upon me during the early months of that year, a purgatory which made me ten years older.

But, thanks to an established reputation and a friend indeed—the bow and sheet-anchors of the merchant's bark—I was enabled to outride the storm, and gradually work my way into the broad, open sea of returning prosperity, while many much stronger vessels sank beneath the waves to be seen no more. But I was obliged to economize in every possible manner, including my family expenses, which had always been economical. At length, after much anxious discussion, we were driven to the decision that Tom must leave college; this being the last reach of economy—in the children's education—which is often unwisely the first. It seemed the end of my long-cherished hope of giving Tom a college education; but, having resolved that it was my duty, I went forward without delay or hesitation.

With many misgivings, I wrote him the following letter, which proved to be the turning-point in his career.

"MY DEAR TOM :

"It pains me deeply to be obliged to say, that my business reverses have been so great that I am compelled to discontinue your course in college for the present. Ascertain the amount of your bills and send it to me. Make your remaining expenses as light as possible, and come home at the end of the quarter. Mother and the boys are well, and send love.

"Your affectionate father."

It was several days before I received a reply, and I began to fear that my boy, who had never met any of the realities of life, might prove unequal to the test so unexpectedly imposed upon him. But the answer which came was a surprise indeed. It ran :

"MY DEAREST FATHER :

"I cannot tell you with what pain and sympathy I read your letter. I have long felt that I was too much of a burden to you with all your other cares, and have been anxious to do something to help myself and relieve you ; but I have not before found an opportunity to do so, only by trying to make the best use of my time. I do not send my bills for I have made arrangements to meet them myself. You may smile at the confidence of a boy who has never earned a dollar in his life, but you will see. I shall leave college at once—but not to come home—if my plan meets your approval. It is this. Several of the students here are going into the country to teach school during

the winter, and I have decided to try it too. Some of them have never taught who are inferior to me in scholarship, and I think I can do as well as they. The salary will be small, but it will enable me to meet my bills and return to college in the spring and go on with my class, if I keep up some of my studies during the winter. It will be hard work, teaching days and studying nights, but what is my strength good for, if not for such emergencies as this? I will try it, if you consent. You have worked hard many years for us, and it is no more than right that I should labor to lighten some of your burdens now. Please let me know soon if you approve my plan, as there is an opening for a school which I wish to take at once.

“Your affectionate son,

“TOM.”

What wonder that tears stood in my eyes when I finished reading this letter? I was at the same time surprised and delighted. My boy, whom I had never thought of but as a boy, had at once become a man. No longer a dependant, but a companion and friend, a support and comfort. What happier revelation can come to a fond father than this? What more beautiful relation in life than that of father and son, thus united in the bonds of mutual love and confidence? Happy, thrice happy such fathers! *but, alas! too few.* I was also greatly surprised at

my son's proposition. That an immature youth like him could take charge of a school, seemed to me preposterous. I supposed that some kind of special training or preparation was necessary for such a position. At all events I knew that an examination of some sort was required; and I concluded that the examiner must be the proper judge of his qualifications; so I gave my consent, willing to encourage his desire for self-helpfulness, that he might try to get a certificate and a school, of which I had many doubts. But they were soon removed by the reply that he had secured both, and also a recommendation from his college professors, which pleased me more. In fact, the shrewd youth, as I afterward learned, had already engaged the school when he wrote me first. Thus Tom became a teacher.

Tom's experience as a pedagogue was brief, but valuable. "Worth a whole year in college," he declared. We watched his experience during the winter with much interest and anxiety. His letters were frequent and full of striking and novel, if not always pleasant, incidents in his career.

He was informed by the committee which engaged him that they could not afford to employ a

regular teacher, as they wished to cut down expenses, and so had determined to employ a student or some one who could fill the place while pursuing some other occupation. As he afterward learned, their object was that the public money received from the State should meet the whole expense, so that they should have no school tax to pay.

Thus, that which was expected to bless the people of the fortunate State with the proceeds of its public land, proved a curse instead, by increasing the miserliness of its people and their indifference to its public schools. People care nothing for what costs nothing. But it proved a valuable school to Tom, as it has to many a man of eminence who has sharpened his wits upon his pupils, while he has made the schools a stepping-stone to other occupations.

The school to which Tom was appointed was almost in view from the college, the supposed centre of learning, yet the two were as far apart in sympathy and in every sense of being engaged in the same great work of education, as if situated in opposite quarters of the globe. The one, with her cloistered halls and dreaming professors, gazing upon the distant world through their spectacles

dimmed by the dust of antiquity, unmindful of all obligation to the great masses who do not go to college; the other, isolated from the whole current of material and mental progress, pursuing the antiquated methods of the past, feeling no impulse from the intellectual life of the college, and contributing nothing to it, or to the social life of its immediate locality. The building in which Tom found himself installed was of stone, and with very little change, the same as it had stood for a century, while its threshold was worn by the little feet of the grandfathers of the present generation. The same old benches stood around the walls, ornamented with the knife-marks of four generations, while the walls were frescoed with smoke and rain, and the floors inlaid with mosaics of holes and patches. The emotions of the young pedagogue as he stood there nervously awaiting the opening hour, with its unknown duties and untried responsibilities, watching to take his cue from the pupils as to what to do first, and wondering how he should ever get through the day, can be understood only by those who have stood in his place. Those who have not, can imagine themselves placed in command of an ocean steamer about to cross the Atlantic without ever

having been aboard of one before. But Tom finished the day at last, and also the remaining days of the term.

His naturally quick apprehension soon taught him how to fall into the routine of his new calling. His familiarity with the ways of boys, he being but a boy himself, showed him how to manage them, while his good-nature and urbanity, with his leadership in their athletic sports, made him popular. Nothing increases respect for a teacher so much as to find that he is something more. But while Tom found it comparatively easy to manage the school, he did not find it so easy to manage the school Board, or to be managed by them. He had not learned how to listen to advice which he knew to be folly, or to be governed by the caprices of ignorance and pretension. The Board was composed of five men, three of them being wealthy merchants and manufacturers, who resided in the district only part of the year, and rarely attended the meetings of the Board. Of the other two, one was an uneducated Englishman, who had not yet acquired command of his native tongue; and the other, an aspiring Irishman, who had recently been elected to represent his large constituency in the district.

Tom had not been in the school but a few days when he was informed by one of the boys that the new trustee was watching him, concealed in a neighboring doorway, as he went in and out of the school-room, to see if he were punctual to his hours. Not long after, the trustee appeared in the school-room one morning, walking up the aisle in a swaggering manner, with his hat on, while the pupils gazed and giggled. Tom requested him politely to remove his hat and be seated ; but without doing so, the foreign functionary broke forth into a harangue as to the duties of the teacher, with reference to Tom's shortcomings. He gave him much advice, in view of his youth and inexperience, which was very galling to a person of Tom's disposition. But he controlled himself sufficiently to say only that, as the worthy trustee had now relieved his mind, he might be seated if he wished to observe the school. He then said he believed he was engaged to instruct the school, and if he did not suit, the Board were at liberty to employ some one else ; but while he was teacher, he should command his end of the ship, and the trustees might do the same with theirs.

The honored officer was so astonished at this

audacity, that he said not another word ; he replaced his hat and marched out of the room ; but ever after he was an avowed enemy, determined to have Tom removed at the earliest moment, and in the meantime to do all he could to obstruct the teacher's efforts ; in which laudable ambition he was not alone among the trustees of the land.

The strong point of the English member was his zealous care for the school premises and supplies. He was particularly eloquent on kalsomining and ventilation.

The English member walked into the school one afternoon with his usual high look, yet with a cordial manner, for, as Tom soon perceived, he was evidently loaded up with a speech.

In order to avert the discharge, if possible, Tom very politely invited him to inspect the school, and called up the several classes and exhibited some simple exercises which he had taught them, and in which the functionary appeared much interested. Tom was congratulating himself upon his escape from the speech, when the overcharged officer broke forth.

"What this school needs is more hair."

Tom looked at him in amazement. He was not *at all* deficient in the usual capillary equipment, nor

were the pupils, as far as he could see, whose unkempt top-knots before him ranged in all colors, from tow-white to brick-red and crow's-wings, while the trustee's crown, he observed, was nearly "scalped in the unequal fight with Time."

Receiving no reply, he again exclaimed :

"I tell you, you must have more hair ; you cannot live without hair."

This struck Tom as a still more remarkable paradox, of which the gentleman was himself a living refutation ; still, he was speechless until the officer, again exclaiming "you must have more hair," sprang to the window and raised it, saying :

"Let in the hair of 'eaven."

Tom, scarcely able to control his countenance, quietly observed that the room was somewhat close, and that he himself was a believer in fresh air. The floodgates were now open for the speech which Tom could no longer divert.

After reminding the pupils that "they did n't have no such schools in his day," which statement Tom easily credited, and of their privileges under our glorious public-school system, he made the startling and original statement that perhaps he saw before him the future president of the United

States. This, however, created little astonishment, and was received with less incredulity. Then he branched off to the American spread-eagle, concluding by striking an attitude and beating his breast, exclaiming:

“Look at me. See what education can do. But our great men are fast dropping off and you must prepare to take their places. Sumner is gone. Chase is gone. Greeley is gone—and—and I don’t feel very well myself.”

The applause which followed this somewhat unintended conclusion diverted for a moment the flow of his oratory. Then he began a brief examination of the school by asking the distance to the next village. To this no answer being given, he exclaimed:

“Just as I thought. You know all about the North Pole, Africa, and the moon, but nothing about your own town.”

Then he launched into a denunciation of the lax methods of modern school discipline, in comparison with the flagellations and fagging of his native land, and declared himself emphatically in favor of capital punishment in schools. Tom, thinking to correct him, whispered:

"You mean corporal punishment, I think."

"No, I don't," he shouted, "I mean capital punishment. It is the only way to beat learning into the youngsters' heads. I came from where the English language was made, and I guess I know how to use it," he concluded, with a withering look at Tom, who was puzzling over the new idea, that in order to fill the children's heads they should first be taken off.

"But," continued the speaker, "I am not opposed to all these new-fangled notions; I am emphatically in favor of degraded schools and the degraded school system."

This was more than Tom could bear. He burst into a laugh, exclaiming: "You have them, you have them now! You and such as you are degrading the schools every day."

The scholars joined in the confusion, and the bewildered committee man, having lost the trail of his speech, seized his hat and hastily departed, with the remaining portion undelivered and reserved for a future occasion.

Tom had made another opponent to his further employment in that community. In relating in the village some of the incidents of the trustee's visit, he

learned that they were characteristic of the man. That upon a former occasion, he, reading in the paper of the discussion over the Nebraska bill in Congress, had made anxious inquiries as to who was this Nebraska Bill who was making so much disturbance. Again, observing in the papers the column headed "Shipping Intelligence," he inquired where they were shipping so much of that strange stuff. "Not in his direction certainly," observed Tom; "still it would be well if several cargoes of that valuable commodity could be imported for the especial use of our school Boards."

He was not greatly surprised when, a little later, he received a note from the Clerk of the Board, informing him that his "servises"—in that officer's reformed spelling—would not be further required. With genuine regret, he prepared to close his connection with the school, for though many of its experiences had been unpleasant, and his labors arduous, he had found the contact with the young minds around him full of vivifying influence, and the process of education connected with the highest pleasures of the human mind.

He thought, with pain, of forever severing the new-formed links which bound him to his pupils;

feeling, as in a sense, their intellectual father. But he was not aware of their attachment to him until, the last afternoon, when he had said a few parting words and dismissed them, none left their seats. Then one of the older boys stepped before him and, in a few simple words, presented him with an album containing the autographs of his pupils "as a token of their love and esteem." He was completely surprised, and could only, with choking utterance, return his thanks and grasp their hands in genuine grief of a leave-taking which all knew to be forever. When all were gone, he sat gazing upon the vacant benches in deep, sad reverie; thinking of the past generations which had gone thence, and of the latest whose immortal destinies had been touched by his guiding hand, which, for a time, had held the levers of life, and a tear trembled in his eye at the thought of the teacher's responsibilities, and a silent prayer went up that his errors might be overruled by superior wisdom.

He returned to college and renewed his studies with an added zest in the light of his recent experience, feeling that now he had begun to be a man, and realizing that he must educate himself, that all he could learn from books was idle words in *comparison with the teachings of life.*

Tom had one other experience which he did not relate to me, but which he confessed in a letter to his mother. He wrote:

"My dear mother, I have a confession to make to you ; I am in love, deeply, desperately in Love, with a big "L." Her name is Lydia, a buxom, black-eyed beauty, whose 'eyes of fire' I first noticed fixed upon me over her book in school, for she is one of my pupils ; but I have been taking lessons from her—in love. Those eyes following me about the school-room first attracted me, then her modest manners and bewitching innocence completed the conquest. I accompanied her home from spelling-schools and evening parties, where we ate apples together and snapped seeds at each other until I was smitten to the heart. There is only one drawback to my happiness ; she stammers and never yet has been able to express her love for me in words. But I am sure she loves me truly, by the look of her eyes and her constant attention to me, though I have never told my love ; but I mean to, the next opportunity I have. Then we will be married soon, and I will be so brave and work so hard to make a home for her and not burden papa.

"She has an old admirer, though, who is greatly put out, and threatens to chastise me for my impertinence. He attempted to do it the other evening. As I turned a corner, he confronted me with a club and struck at me, but I parried the blow and clinched with him. Soon we were down, and I on top. Then he tried a dodge on me and cried : 'Oh ! you are the teacher ; I thought it was Bill

Jones.' 'Consider me Bill Jones,' I answered, and gave him a box or two, to teach him manners, and let him up. I have not been able to see my charming Lydia since, but I know she loves me. You must meet her soon and see her beautiful black eyes.

"Your affectionate son, Tom."

"It is well his first attack is so severe," said his mother. "He will be the sooner over it, and be less liable to the contagion in future."

She was right. A few months after, we received another note from Tom. He said: "She is married, and to that bumpkin that attempted to beat me. They were engaged all the time; but I can stand it, for she is cross-eyed, and that is what made me think she was looking at me all the time."

"That eruption 'came out' well at all events," remarked his mother. "Let us hope the others will be as light."

Tom also learned several other things during his pedagogical career. When he first arrived in the village, he was informed, that if he wished to be popular and retain his position, he must secure the favor of the local "ring" by joining their party and secret fraternity. This he did not do, and the consequences were what we have seen. But he was not

much surprised on learning, some time after, that the head man of the ring, having at last failed to get himself reëlected to office, was found by his successor to be a defaulter. He also learned something of the "battle of the books" by the flaming circulars which showered upon him, announcing the failure of Appleby's readers, with encomiums from unknown school officers, in unheard-of towns, upon the virtues of the rival McStaffey's series. He also saw how such testimonials are secured from ignorant officials, and the means by which the frequent changes in text-books were brought about by magnanimous offers to purchase the old books in part payment for the new; they being suddenly aroused by the eloquent book-agent to the knowledge that the old and trusted text-books were little less than the "sum of all villainies," and the new ones perfection. Changes in teachers, he found, were nearly as rapid and unjustifiable. Tom found, one morning, that the teacher in his primary department, a most competent lady, had been displaced by a late arrival from the Emerald Isle—having landed the previous week in fact,—who could not speak so as to be understood by her pupils. She had a certificate from the commissioner, according

to law, though he had not examined or even seen her, secured, it was afterward learned, through one of the trustees, *by letter*.

How the commissioners themselves are elected, Tom had an opportunity to learn. He was informed one day, by a member of the ring, that he might have a vacation of a day to attend a convention in an adjoining town, for the purpose of nominating a school commissioner. Though he had no ambition for "dabbling in politics," he welcomed the offered intermission, which he had found all too difficult to obtain, and attended the convention. There he was promptly initiated into the "ways that are dark," and the means of "bringing in" the candidate selected by the leaders before the meeting of the convention. His ideas of popular democracy met a sudden revulsion, and his respect for the sources of educational authority was greatly diminished.

He came to the conclusion, as others who have looked most deeply into the subject, have done, that the school commissioner should not be an elected officer, but should be appointed for special fitness. A stream cannot rise higher than its source.

Tom's experiences were soon followed by a new *light on our own minds*.

CHAPTER XII.

A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS.

“**U**NCLE AG.,” asked Willie one day, “did you make Miss Diana leave our school.”

“Certainly not, my boy,” he replied. “I never heard of a woman’s being made to do any thing that she did not wish to do. Their ways are past finding out. I am very sorry that she left. I may have been the means of her leaving, but I don’t know; I don’t think I know any thing; I am completely bewildered.”

“Why don’t you marry her, if you’re going to?” asked Bob, bluntly.

“That is what I don’t know,” was the sad reply.

“Why don’t she come to our house any more? I want to see her,” continued Willie.

“My dear boy, you cannot want to see her as much as I do,” Ag. replied in a tone of deep, hopeless despair; “but I have not seen her since Christmas. I do not know where she is, even if living or dead. I do not know that I shall ever see her

again," he sighed, as he turned his face from the boys.

Greatly they mourned for their former teacher and felt the unhappy change in their condition, of which Bob was the unconscious cause. But he slipped from the room, and his merry voice was soon heard in the street.

Willie sat long in silence, vainly striving to solve the mystery, until Ag. suddenly clasped his hand, exclaiming: "My boy, never love any woman but your mother, and you may be happy," and left the room. In the mind of the dreaming youth as he sat there, rose thoughts of Miss Miller and his mother, the only women that he loved, and visions of the great deeds in which he should figure "when he should be a man." Visions, alas! like many other day-dreams, never to be realized.

Ag. had been unable to find any explanation for the strange course of his betrothed and her sudden departure from the house. After three days of anxious waiting he called on her, only to receive a note which he opened with a trembling hand. He read: "It is with the greatest pain that I am compelled to say that I cannot see you. I see my duty and the right clearly now, and nothing can change

my course. I appreciate your honorableness and goodness as you can never know. I love you too well, I regard your happiness and mine too much, to accept the sacrifice you would make. I fly from a dreadful future. Do not attempt to follow. It would be vain and vain if you should find me. Oh, why did we meet thus to part again! God bless you and pity me. I send my last kiss, which I dare not give. Farewell; and now, forever!" On the page was a slight stain which looked like a tear drop. Ag. crushed the missive in his hand and walked away, blinded in his despair.

"You are a woman, please read and explain that," he exclaimed excitedly, placing the note in his sister's hand. My wife read and saw that though nothing but a woman's love could have prompted such a sacrifice, yet her love was ruled by a mightier—woman's sense of duty—on whose altar she was sacrificing herself and him she loved. For love and justice both are blind. But she was unable to divine the cause of her strange course and change of feeling. We were all equally in mystery. Ag. felt as one in a dream, struggling with an unseen enemy, yet powerless to use hand or foot. "I will find her, if alive," he declared. "I will

know the worst. If she rejects me I cannot be more miserable than now." And Ag. became again a wanderer on the earth.

Several months elapsed, and we were anxiously awaiting his return, to know the result of his quest for his lost love, when we received the following letter. It was mailed from a distant city.

"I have found her. I have also found a little heaven upon earth, and she the ruling angel. But I am shut out. There is no hope. Henceforth I am a wanderer, unblest. Some strange delusion has taken possession of her mind ; some mysterious and malign spirit has deceived her ; she remains beautiful and calm, but deaf to my entreaties."

"After many inquiries, I found that she had left the city suddenly and secretly, and none of her friends knew where she had gone ; but with many efforts I traced her at length to this place. I cannot describe to you the occupation in which I found her engaged. You must go and see for yourself. I cannot see her. Better that our first parting had been forever. 'Who loves and says he is not miserable, lies.' Now I have nothing to live for. I may never see you again. Give my love to Minerva and the children. Tell them not to forget their unhappy uncle. Their love is the brightest spot in my memory, and the hours I have spent with them the happiest of my life. Good-by."

I was deeply touched by Ag.'s apparent despair, and by the thought of so much nobleness left to go

to ruin. I could not fathom the mystery which had caused it, for I could not doubt Miss Miller's sincerity and regard for him. I determined to visit her and see the occupation of which he spoke, and learn, if possible, the motives which influenced her.

When I reached the city and the building where she was, as I entered, my ears were greeted with the sound of happy children's voices, singing, in their native innocence and joy, songs of melodious sport. Softly I entered, and my eyes were still more surprised and charmed by what they saw. A circle of children, of from three to seven years of age, with joined hands were moving in rhythmic measure around, and back and forth, with hands and feet and eyes and lips engaged in their instructive play, while their sparkling eyes and glowing faces attested their interest and pleasure. They were following, with quick and eager glance and movement, the words and signs of their leader in the centre, whose every look and act showed her love and enthusiasm for her occupation,—work it could not be called.

"What is this?" I asked, as she turned and greeted me with cordial surprise.

"*This is a school,*" she replied, with a quiet smile.

"A school?" said I. "It is very different from any school I ever saw. These children are not studying; they are playing."

"You shall see our books and see them study," said she, with another smile.

The little ones were now seated in little chairs around a long, low table in quietness and order, yet with animation and eager interest for the next exercise. She then placed upon the table, balls, cylinders, and cubes of wood, variously colored, simple geometrical figures, slats, sticks, and rings, small seeds, shells, stones, etc., clay and implements for modelling, and many other simple articles with which children so love to be occupied.

"These are our books," said she; "they are called gifts. Their choice and use, however, are based upon the profoundest principles of the human mind and close study of the methods of nature. They are not all employed at once, but in strict logical order."

Then, while the smaller children received the colored balls and cubes, others laid geometric figures with the slats and sticks, and others modelled simple, yet wonderful figures out of clay, she explained :

“This is called the kindergarten or child’s play school. Its originator was Fredreich Froebel. Before he was four years old, he lived in a house which was so built that it was under the shadow of a church, and no sunbeam could enter it. His great amusement, at one time, was to watch some workmen as they were repairing the church, and his impulse was to use what pieces of furniture or other objects he could move, to imitate them in their building. It was the recollection of this ungratified building instinct which suggested to him, in later years, that children ought to be provided with materials for building among their playthings. To this was probably added the observation, which every one must make who sees much of children, that ‘to make a house’ is a universal form of unguided play. As Froebel says, all these plays have originated from childish instincts; but they must be understood in their meaning and aim, in order to reach their educational end. People think the child is only seeking amusement when it plays. That is a great mistake. Play is the first means of development of the human mind,—its first effort to make acquaintance with the outward world, and to exercise the powers of body and mind. The human

instinct needs guidance by free movement. This guidance can only be given by one who knows the goal which is to be reached by the manifold activity of the blind, natural feeling of the child.

“ These gifts are based upon the fact that mental development begins with the observation of concrete objects, and gradually expands into a comprehension of abstract ideas. Teaching heretofore has proceeded in just the opposite direction, alike against nature and common-sense. The kindergarten rejects reading, writing, reckoning, and spelling, but it teaches children to do things much more clever. In it, children under six build, plait, fold, model, sing, act ; in short, they learn in play, to work, to construct, to invent, to relate, and to speak correctly, to love each other, and—what is of almost equal importance—to play together. But the kindergarten not only supplies the proper materials and opportunities for the innate mental powers to open like blossoms in the bud, but it also preserves them from the harm of civilization, until their mental powers have grown equal to its dangers. What makes the children so happy ? Because their mental and physical powers are exercised and developed in due harmony and in accord with the

methods and facts of nature. If all education were conducted under the same principles, it would be more satisfactory and successful. The difference is not one of mere method and detail, but of foundation and theory as diverse as the continents; or rather, the one is based upon principles and science, the other has none."

While she was speaking, I observed one of the little ones, having become weary, go to her as to its mother. She took it up and soothed it, and it was now asleep in her arms as trustfully as on its mother's breast, while her natural beauty was heightened by the glow of enthusiasm and the motherly fondness with which she clasped the little sleeper.

"You have found your field, certainly," I exclaimed. "I am delighted with what I see. This proves what I have long believed, that, under true education, the children will be happy, and this is shown to be in the right direction, because the children are happy. It is only the beginning, but a grand one, for it is based upon the eternal truths of human nature. In it I see the hope of the world."

"Not only are the children happy," said she, "but *the teacher* is happy also. I do not now dread the

opening day and count its weary hours of deadly routine. I do not live in dread of the criticising inspector, and exist under the shadow of the dark judgment day of examinations. Averages have now for me no terror, and no system with its iron rules can come between me and my pupils. Here is liberty, light, and love. 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven!'"

A tear was in her eye as she ceased, and she pressed the little one closer to her breast. The workers had now finished, and were admiring and comparing each other's work, with an occasional look from their teacher, a word of commendation here, or of correction there. Then, at a signal, all rose, collected and carefully put away their implements in an orderly manner, which accompanies all they do, thus instilling habits of order and method. Indeed, one of the characteristic features of this system, is the attention bestowed upon the minute details of the child's acts, for by the smallest things do they learn. Then as they departed, each came to their teacher for a parting kiss, was carefully prepared to go by her gentle hand, and dismissed with a word of love and cheer.

"Please tell me more of this," I said.

"It is the teachings of Froebel," she replied. He says: 'To learn to comprehend nature in the child, is to comprehend one's own nature and the nature of mankind. Let it be asked *how* we are to educate, instead of everlastingly repeating what is to be attained. All that does not grow out of one's inner being, all that is not one's own original feeling and thought, oppresses and defaces the individuality of man instead of calling it forth, and nature becomes thereby a caricature. Shall we never cease to stamp human nature, even in childhood, like coins; to overlay it with foreign images and foreign superscriptions, instead of letting it develop itself and grow into form according to the laws of life planted in it by the Father? But I will protect childhood, that it may not, as in earlier generations, be pinioned, as in a strait-jacket, in garments of custom and ancient prescription that have become too narrow for the new time. I shall show the way and shape the means, that every human soul may grow, of itself, out of its own individuality.' This is the new education."

"Is this better than the school of one?" I asked when she had finished; but I regretted the words *almost* as soon as spoken. The color forsook her

cheek, her head drooped upon her bosom, and she trembled with inward agitation.

“Why did you come?” at length she asked.

“Why did you go?” I said in reply. “Why did you not remain with us, be one of us, and be happy?”

“I could not, I could not,” she said, with a movement of her hands as if to repel an opposing thought. “I cannot receive such a sacrifice. We should both be miserable.”

“It is no sacrifice, I assure you; Ag. loves you with a true and tender affection, worthy any woman,” I replied, with a little sternness, for I could have no patience with what seemed to me like vacillation. “You have sent him away; God knows where or when we shall see him again! You are driving one of the noblest men the sun ever shone on to his ruin!”

“Oh, don’t say that! don’t, I beg you!” she cried. “I love him with all my heart; I could die for him, but I cannot marry him. Will you not believe me? Oh, forgive me! save him, save him!” and she seized my hand with an eagerness of anguish and looked into my face with such an appeal of suffering that all my reproachfulness forsook me, and I promised

to do all in my power, with a deeper pity for her than even I felt for him.

I left her, convinced that woman's heart is a mystery, which the more a man attempts to fathom the deeper he becomes involved in doubt.

CHAPTER XIII.

A THUNDERBOLT.

AG.'S troubles were soon put out of mind by a greater sorrow of our own.

Like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky, dropped into our midst one morning the following telegram :

Your daughter, Isabel, has been expelled from this institution. She left in company with the music teacher.

Dr. GROTIUS.

"Would that she were dead!" was my silent thought as I read those fatal words. I strove to conceal the message from my wife, but she, perceiving my agitation, which I could not conceal, I was obliged to hand it to her without a word, for I could not speak. A deadly paleness overspread her face, her hand trembled, but her eyes were tearless as she sat with fixed gaze, but seeing nothing.

"I thought she or Tom was dead," I at length found strength to say. "But this is worse." I could not pronounce her name. That had dropped out of

the family coronet like a jewel in the sea—buried deeper than in the grave, for from that the name and memory rise, hallowed and immortal; but in a moment a word had done the work of years, and unconsciously I was unable to speak the old, pet name of my daughter.

“Any thing but this! What can I do?” I again exclaimed. “We can fight every foe, even death, but against such an invisible enemy life has no weapons.”

In the weakness of despair, I bowed my head, as the hot tears gathered, which had not dimmed my eyes since my other angel girl was laid in the tomb. Then I wished that this one had been laid there also, or never seen the light. Such pangs can pierce a parent's heart. When I raised my eyes they met my wife's, still fixed in that marble gaze, whom for a moment, in the selfishness of grief, I had forgotten. I rose and went to her, and clasped her icy hand. Then with a sudden revulsion the blood rushed back to her cheek, her eye moistened, and she said, with the calm, clear voice of a prophet whose eye has pierced the veil:

“It is false. It cannot be true. It *is* not true!”

Then her head fell upon my shoulder, and the

floodgates of tears were opened. To this succeeded the calmness of hope and trust.

"Our daughter," she said, "has been too well trained for this to be true; not by word, but by every influence since her first infant breath drew the unconscious virtue of home. Now go and bring her back to us."

"But why has she not come home? She should have reached here before this," I asked with man-like logic, while, woman following the *a priori* reasoning of faith and love, reaches a juster conclusion. And who shall say she is not the oftener right? My wife gave no answer to my question, for she had none; but there being no other course, I determined to follow her advice. It was well that I did. Happy the man who has a wife to give him advice in matters beyond his province. A wise man is he who follows it.

In a few hours I entered the "institution" of Dr. Grotius. Every thing is an institute in this country, from the "Metaphysical Institute" for the cure of corns, to the Smithsonian. I passed through the gate in the imitation wall in a state of "ruinous perfection," rang the bell, and called for Dr. Grotius. He soon appeared, tall, spectacled, and wigged, with

the imitation dignity of stiffness and sternness. He was gotten up admirably for his part, as the actors say, but I instantly saw that his name was Pretension. But I was too much absorbed in the object of my visit, to pay much attention to my surroundings.

"Where is my daughter?" I demanded.

"You know as well as I, sir," he replied. "Have you not received my telegram?"

"I have, but it is perfectly unintelligible to me. Will you please explain?"

"Certainly. For a long time your daughter's room has been a *rendez-a-vous*," he said, in imitation French, "of disorder and insubordination; but not until recently did I learn that her conduct had become actually disgraceful. Last evening, I learned that she had formed a plan to escape from her room by the window, and elope with the music teacher. It is the first taint of disgrace, sir, that has ever come upon my school, and I felt it keenly. In self-protection, I was obliged to expel her. I cannot allow such contamination here for one moment. I am convinced that my course was correct, for I have learned that since she left she has been seen in company with the music teacher, who is, well, not up to our standard of morals."

"When did she go?" I asked sternly, with a look that pierced his thin disguises.

"Last evening," he replied.

"Last evening, and alone!" I exclaimed. "Did she go voluntarily or was she sent away?"

"She was sent," was the reply. "I could not allow such a character to remain in this institution an hour."

I could restrain my feelings no longer.

"This," I burst forth, "this is the protection you offer to our children. This is your moral training and supervision. You bring men whom you know to be immoral within this fold, under the sanction of your approval, to corrupt these innocent and unsuspecting minds, and then, at the first suspicion of impropriety, you expel the young girl from your roof at night, and alone, casting reproach upon her name for life, unmindful of the hearts you crush—in *self-protection*, for the reputation of your institution! Why did you not inform me, if she had done any thing wrong, and let me take her away? You have done that for which you cannot atone in all the days of your life, and which, if known, would ruin you and your school."

In the heat of my words I had approached him,

while he retreated before me from the parlor into the hall. Now he raised his hands, deprecating any loud words, as he saw faces of listeners over the banisters, and in humble tones besought me to be calm, saying he would do any thing in the world to satisfy me, and would receive my daughter again. He entreated me not to do any thing to injure him, for this school was his only dependence.

Much more he said in the same strain, until, in disgust at his pusillanimity, I said :

“After you have done me the greatest possible injury in your hasty cowardice, you beg me not to injure you, and offer to do an equal wrong to the others under your care, if your charge be true. I only ask you to help me find my child, for she is but a child to be protected, not punished.”

He left the room saying he would make inquiries as to the place where she was last seen.

The instant he left the parlor, the sliding doors connecting with an adjoining room where I had noticed intermittent practising on a piano and rustling at the doors, were suddenly withdrawn, and a fair young face appeared in the opening, saying in a breath : “Are you Teazel’s father? She has gone away, but don’t believe a word they say. She

is the best girl in the school; old Poppy—" Here his returning steps were heard, the doors were as hastily closed, and the practising was vigorously resumed as he entered the room. He informed me that my daughter had been seen that morning at a hotel in one of the towns between there and the city. I hastily departed in order to take the next train, and with mingled emotions of doubt and dread, I ran over and over in my mind all the circumstances that I had learned, as I hastened toward the city. As the train approached a station I glanced anxiously out of the window, and to my glad surprise saw Ag. standing on the platform awaiting the train, with travelling bag in hand, and a disheartened look on his face, painful to see in a man in the prime of life and hope. I rushed from the train and grasped his hand.

"My brother," I could only gasp, "come with me."

I dragged him into the train and we were on our way before he could speak.

"What has happened?" he eagerly inquired.

"Every thing," I answered. "'All the world is in the sea';—Isabel."

"What of her?" he interrupted.

I told him as well as I could of the dreadful news, for my mind had not yet been able to take in the full measure of our calamity. But the effect upon Ag. was greater than I had anticipated.

"Gone! with the music teacher—at Dr. Grotius!" he gasped, as he seized my arm and set his teeth with an expression of passion that alarmed me, though I knew that his feelings had been greatly overwrought during the past few months.

"The villian! the dog!" he hissed through his clenched teeth. "It is he! It is he!"

"Who?" I asked in surprise.

"My old enemy, Count Muzio."

"Muzio!" gasped I. "How can that be?"

"It is he, the scoundrel! He is an unprincipled adventurer. He met and followed Miss Miller to her new home. She told me that he was masquerading as a music teacher at Dr. Grotius. I suspected that he had poisoned her mind against me, and I was on my way there to expose him and demand satisfaction for his slanders. Still, I knew it would be in vain, and I was almost disheartened. Now I am aroused again. I will find him and avenge both our wrongs. Now I have an object to live for," and a fire shot from his dark eyes, almost

transforming the usually calm and cheerful Uncle Ag.; for when deep waters are stirred from beneath, there is a commotion not easily calmed.

I was in my turn greatly agitated. I had until then trusted that there would be some safe solution of the trouble, but the thought of my daughter in the company of that villain wellnigh unmanned me.

‘Be calm,’ now spoke Ag., having subdued his own excitement and resolved on his course. “Leave the matter to me. I will follow him like a hound on his track. I will find her. I will save her. I will be revenged. Leave it to me.”

I was too much aroused at first to think of trying to give up my search or to cease my efforts, though I knew they were vain.

“Go home,” he insisted. “Comfort and cheer Minerva, and make inquiries among your friends and Teazel’s acquaintances. They may hear of her. She may go to them. She is safe, believe me. The villain cannot corrupt her pure mind. I will find her soon, and I will punish him.”

“What will you do?” I asked.

“I will follow and inquire on the train and find where they stopped last night. They could not have reached the city. Then I will telegraph, and

follow in the course they took ; I will also send word to Miss Miller. The wretch may go to her again or write to her, and she may advise me about him. She has all a woman's tact and wisdom—and all her goodness,—to all but me ; to me she is cruel in her firmness. Friendly, but distant as the stars. I intended never to see her or write to her again ; but this will give me one more occasion, one more glimpse of heaven—then farewell forever. Meantime I will find Teazel—and my enemy. Here is the station where I shall stop first. Cheer up. Good-by.”

He pressed my hand as in a vise, and I continued on my way to my darkened home in bewilderment and despair. I met my wife at the door, with the anxious question on her face and the hopeless answer reflected from my own. Equally great was her surprise at my meeting with Ag. ; but nothing could shake her faith in her daughter.

“She will come soon,” she said ; “some great wrong has been done, but it is not in her.”

“God grant it !” I sighed, but I did not tell her Ag.’s revelation in regard to the count.

CHAPTER XIV.

MORE LIGHT.

NEXT morning came a telegram from Ag.: "Meet me at M——." I showed the cheering message to my wife. Tears of hope stood in her eyes as she again bade me go and find our daughter.

Ag., after leaving me, had found that Isabel and the Italian had been in that place the day previous, and had left on the morning train in the opposite direction. Disconcerted, and himself almost disheartened by this apparent flight of Isabel, he followed, not knowing where to go or where to stop. If he should alight he would lose the train for the day and waste precious time, and if he continued he might pass by the very object of his search. At length he came to R—— Junction, and alighted to make inquiries and ascertain, if possible, which direction they had taken. From a slight clue he decided that they had changed cars there, and he did the same. With faint hopes and fierce forebodings

he hastened on with mingled emotions of pain and anger. With rush and roar the train sped on, but not so fast nor so furious as the train of his thoughts as he pictured, the sprightly, innocent Isabel, still a child to him, in the company of that base-hearted adventurer, and exposed to unimagined evils. His thoughts were interrupted by the stopping of the train and the announcement that it was going no further. In deep disgust he stepped out; but upon inquiring at the only hotel in the place, he learned that they had been there, and had returned only an hour since in the direction from which he came—whom he had passed while absorbed in his sad reveries. From this place he had telegraphed me to meet him at a station through which they must pass, and which I might have time to reach before them, while he hoped to intercept them by another route.

I hastened on, full of doubts and anxious queries as to Ag.'s brief, uncertain message. As I neared the station I glanced from the window, and my heart stood still as I saw, standing on the platform, with travelling bag in hand, my daughter Isabel, with the same bright look on her face, yet with a shade of anxiety, as she looked for the train which was

going to the city. By her side stood a tall, dark-browed stranger, whom I concluded must be the Italian music teacher.

As I stepped out of the cars, Teazel's quick eye caught me, and in a moment her arms were around my neck and her kiss upon my cheek, as she exclaimed: "Oh, my dear papa! where did you come from? I am so glad to see you. I have had such a queer time. I don't know what I should have done, but for Signor Muzio. Let me introduce you." She turned to do so, but he had disappeared. The villain had seen me, and suddenly improved the opportunity to depart. I seized my daughter's hand with a strong, yet trembling grasp. My husky voice and moistened eye she quickly noticed, and exclaimed: "Why, papa, what is the matter? Is any one ill at home? Has any thing happened?" "Not to us," I replied; "but tell me what has happened to you; why are you here?" "Oh, the funniest, queerest things!" she continued, in her gay, volatile manner.

"Jule Juvenal and I had arranged to have a little lark, you know, just the most awfully jolly time we ever had, but old Pop spoilt it all and sent me off here. Is n't that really too bad?"

I could not quite sympathize with my child's disappointment over her "lark," and recalled her to her narrative.

"Well, Jule Juvenal, you see, had arranged with her brother Jack and another fellow to come over with a team and take us out riding, as it was a lovely moonlight evening, perfectly elegant. But how to get out of the building was the rub; so we arranged at a signal from them to let down a string from our window and draw up a rope which they would bring, and let ourselves down. Was n't it jolly? But just about the appointed time, old Poppy sent for me and ordered me to pack my trunk. I thought it a strange performance, but I obeyed, wondering what would come next. Then I was taken with it to the cars. I was put on the train and told to go home. It was all so sudden, I thought it was all a joke or something strange. On the train I met Signor Muzio, who was very polite and amusing. We rode until the train stopped. He said it was n't going any further, and we must stay over night. I was frightened, but he said we could stay at the hotel very comfortably till morning, which we did. This morning we took the wrong train by accident, and had to wait at the end of the route and take the

next train back. Here we had to stop again for another. I believe he made me take the wrong train. But I was determined to go, and came to the station to wait for the next,—and here I met you ; and Signor Muzio has run away. Is n't it all too awfully funny ? ”

I could only clasp my daughter to my breast, and scarcely restrain my tears of joy that the dark cloud which had hung over us was lifted without even having darkened her young and innocent life. While we talked, the train for which she was waiting came up, and Ag. stepped out.

“ O ! Uncle Ag.” she exclaimed with delighted surprise, and threw her arms about his neck, while he was so astonished at this meeting with the object of his search, that he could not say a word. “ Oh ! is n't this too awfully funny ? First papa comes on one train, and then Uncle Ag. on the next, and we all meet here. How rich !——”

“ But you ! ” Ag. at length exclaimed, while I tried to look surprised at seeing him, and to intimate that he should say nothing of the cause of our meeting. He was mystified and confused, until she mentioned that Signor Muzio had run away. Then he suddenly started up, and I had opportu-

nity to tell him that all was well and that I was first going back with Isabel to Dr. Grotius.

"Where is the villain? Where is he?" he whispered.

"Not far away," I answered, "but don't say any thing to Teazel."

"I will find him," he replied, as he grasped my hand and again hurried away.

"My child," said I, "you have been expelled from the school, but we will go back and have matters explained. You were doubtless very thoughtless, and did wrong to think of such a freak, but we will go back." Little was said as we returned, for I was too deeply moved for many words. When we re-entered Dr. Grotius' academy there was a great commotion throughout its borders. I requested the president to summon his school and have the affair investigated. He did so, and I then asked him to state why he had sent my daughter home in that manner. He repeated his statements, with much modification of the harsher features. I then requested Teazel to tell her story, which she did briefly. I then called for the others, who were knowing to the circumstances, to speak, and two of them rose, saying they were the originators of the

whole affair, and ought to be expelled too, if she were. "Now, Dr. Grotius," said I, "I have heard your statement, and that of these girls. My daughter, I believe you. You have never deceived me, and I am sure you do not now. Now, say good-by, for you will never come back. Dr. Grotius, I advise you to be more faithful to your trusts and less anxious for your school, or you won't long have any."

As we rode home, Teazel said: "Jule Juvenal contrived the whole affair; but Dr. Grotius won't expel her. Her father pays extra, and she has extra privileges." That was enough to confirm my opinion of Dr. Grotius. I shall not attempt to describe the meeting between mother and daughter. Love and faith were true. The terrible message was never shown to Teazel, and she never knew of the shadow of desolation which had hung over our home and her sweet, young life. But her days at boarding-school were ended.

A few days after this, I called upon Judge Juvenal, with whom I was slightly acquainted, and informed him of my experience at Dr. Grotius' academy.

"I am done with the whole matter," replied he with a deep emphasis, which showed that his had

been a profoundly sad experience. "Children are a curse, and education is a fraud. Tell your daughter never to have any children. I have done every thing for mine, spent fortunes on their schooling, given them every advantage, and they are only a disgrace to me. My oldest son I gave the best education, and placed him in a leading lawyer's office, with every facility for rising, but he soon fell into intemperate habits, abandoned his profession, and disappeared in the West, while I am not yet done paying his debts. My other children are only expensive encumbrances. I would not send one of them to school, or spend any such sums on their education, if I had to do it again. It is worse than useless. There are no good schools," he continued, as I attempted to make a suggestion. "They are all alike: cramming concerns, managed for the purpose of drawing the money out of your pocket, for a pretence of accomplishments which are worth nothing. I send my children and pay the bills, because I don't know what else to do with them. I know I may as well throw the money into the fire—but it all goes there in the end. You think you see signs of better things? I do not. If a change comes, it won't do me any good. My children are ruined. Good-morning."

I left him with a sad heart, yet I could but reflect that perhaps if the Judge had given less money, but more time and personal care to the training of his children, he would not now be mourning their loss.

We confided Teazel's experience only to our pastor.

We were among the fortunate few who have a true friend and wise counsellor in their pastor. Dr. James was not only a Doctor of Divinity, but Doctor of Humanity—a nobler title, for which there should be a new degree. He was not only a clergyman by calling, and a pastor by profession, but a breaker of the Bread of Life in the pulpit, because he was a partaker of our real life during the week. He was not one of those who have gone through the usual preparation by books, through the academy, college, and theological seminary, with perhaps a preparatory trip abroad, sandwiched in, that he may draw inspiration for his sermons from Paris and Bagdad.

The profession which comes nearest to the hearts and homes of men, and touches our daily life, as well as our future, at most vital points, is, in its preparation and practice, farthest removed

from our genuine life. But Dr. James could sympathize with his fellow-beings, for he had suffered with them. He strove in every way to aid his fellow-men through the life that now is, to that which is to come. He did not complain of the decrease in church-going. "Men will go where they are led," he said. "They will follow where they are benefited, but they cannot be driven like children to school to be fed on husks. I would apply the same principles to teaching. Make the school so attractive that the children will come freely and gladly. It can be done, and it will be done." After I had related to him Teazel's experience and my interview with Judge Juvenal, he said :

"The great lack of the present age, which makes me tremble for the future, is in the moral training of children, both in the school and family. *Train* up a child in the way he should go, is the injunction of the wise man, not tell him or teach him. Children acquire moral and mental habits by the exercise of their moral and mental faculties, as they learn their mother tongue by speaking it. Habits continued produce character, and character is what we are. The great and primary evil with which educators have to contend, in their pupils, is the

want of the idea and habit of obedience, and of respect for law and religion. This lies at the doors of the parents. It is our American idea of liberty run rampant, which our schools have not checked, but rather encouraged. Far-seeing minds have seen the danger from afar, and sounded the tocsin of alarm. It remains for the people to correct the evil, before it shall be too late."

"You know our boast is," said I, "that our schools are unsectarian."

"Our mistake has been," he replied, "that in running away from sectarianism, we have run away from religion and morality as well. If instruction fails in these purposes, it has accomplished little of its great aims and purposes. The tendency of our time is to, what is called in high-sounding phrase, 'the secularization of the schools.' The vital question is, in what relation should public education stand toward morals and religion? There can be but one right answer. If the State enters the field of education at all, it is her duty to educate morally and religiously. Not to do so is to victimize the opening minds at the most critical period of development, and suicidally to defeat her own great end in training future citizens. Horace Mann said, 'the

school-house is the Republican line of fortification ' ; but as Bishop Thompson said : ' The school-house is the great fountain of national character, and sends forth sweet or bitter waters through all the nation. Let it fall into the hands of irreligious men and Catiline is at the gates of our Rome.' This is our greatest danger to-day ; an evil of which we are already tasting the bitter fruit."

"I did not realize this," said I.

"The influence of our schools," concluded Dr. James, "is to-day a greater and more vital question than that of the churches. I feel it deeply every time I enter the pulpit. If I could only have met these souls twenty, forty years sooner, I could hope to mould them for good ; now, it is, in most cases, too late. Let me teach the children, and you may make their laws. This is the great, the ' New Profession,' in which lies the hope of the country and the world. 'No man is too great or too good to teach little children,' said Dr. Holland. I often feel that I would like to step down from the pulpit, or up, rather, to the teacher's place. This is what the Great Teacher did. He set a child in their midst, and said, 'except ye become as one of these.' So the true teacher will begin with the study of the

child-mind, which is the divine fact, and there learn how to teach by following its aptitudes and faculties; humbly and devoutly perusing it as a sacred chart sent down for our guidance in this most difficult, most divine of duties. The teacher, rather than the preacher, should be ordained, not by the laying on of hands, but by the gift of love and wisdom."

CHAPTER XV.

WILLIE'S DREAM.

THE events of the past few weeks, together with my business anxieties and Ag.'s troubles, had so engrossed my mind, that I had not for some time given much attention to the boys in the public school.

It was now the early spring, but the ominous form of the summer examinations had already begun to cast its long, dark shadow backward over the intervening months. There it stood, the huge, inexorable Moloch, toward which the thousands of children were being pushed, with fear and trembling; some to pass through its fires, perchance, and many, alas! to perish in its fierce embrace.

"My dear, have you noticed Willie?" said my wife one morning.

"What of him?" I asked.

"He has a weary, anxious look in his eyes," she replied, "and a languid, yet earnest manner painful to see in one so young. When he retires it is not to

rest, but in dreams and broken words he seems to be engaged in the labors of the day, and to be overburdened by some great difficulty."

"What is the matter, Willie?" I asked as he came into the room with a languid step and troubled look which pained me to the heart.

"Nothing, papa," he replied, with a feeble smile.

"But you don't look well; what is troubling you?"

"Only the school," he replied. "I am afraid I shall not pass the examinations—and I had such a strange dream last night. It has been with me all day. It seems so real."

"What was it, my dear boy?" I asked, with deep apprehensions.

"I dreamed," he answered, "that I was sitting on a sharp rock, and a huge giant was before me with an immense iron book in his hand like a gridiron, and a long iron rod like a great toasting-fork. Then he asked questions out of the iron book, and if we missed, he would catch us on the iron fork, shut us up in the big book, and toast and eat us. I missed, and just as the giant was going to catch me, a white angel came down with long wings and a beautiful face just like Miss Miller's, and she took me in her

arms and flew away, and up, and up, ever so far, to where there were the most beautiful fields and groves by a bright river, and hundreds of happy children singing and playing on the green grass. Then I looked down and saw the great giant with the iron book eating up the poor children, and I wanted to help them, and begged the angel to go and drive the bad giant away. Then I awoke, but my head ached so I could not sleep any more; and I began to recite over my lesson so I shouldn't miss to-day" —"and be toasted," added Bob. "Miss Cruncher is the big giant with the iron book, and she makes it warm for us if we miss."

"But who was the angel that took my boy away so far?" asked mamma, with a tender sigh and an anxious look at her beautiful boy.

"Oh, she was so lovely and good!" exclaimed he with a glow of pleasure in his pale cheek, "and the children were so happy. I wish I could stay there and play with them forever; I am so tired!"

"But Willie, my dear boy," I asked, "what makes you so anxious about your lessons. You surely can learn them easily. If it were Bob who failed, I should not think it strange."

"I don't care," exclaimed Bob; "the old giantess *can't* catch me. I don't expect to pass anyway."

"Pass what?" I asked.

"The examinations," replied Willie. "If we don't pass, we will be disgraced and be obliged to remain in that grade until the next examination. The teacher is always talking about it and threatening us, and I am so fearful that I shall fail, that I don't know what to do. I know the lessons, but when I am in the class I forget and can't recite just as the teacher wants me to, and she marks me down. If I don't get a certain average, I won't be promoted. If I should fail, I don't know what I would do."

"Don't trouble yourself about that any more," said I. "Go right along the same as usual, and let the dreadful examinations take care of themselves. Don't worry about it. It will soon be over. Then we will go to the country and be as happy as the children of which you dreamed. School is the great goblin of which you are afraid, but shut your eyes and it can't hurt you."

This was good advice and easy to give, but not so easy to follow. We all know how difficult it is to avoid imaginary evils, but no one knows the dread and suffering which such an evil can inflict upon a nervous, sensitive child. I was not aware at the time of the strain and torture to which my chil-

dren were subjected at school, in view of the *dies iræ* of examination, which were impending, under the goading severity of a coarse and heartless teacher. But these facts were impressed upon my mind by subsequent events, in a manner never to be forgotten.

That evening I found Willie stretched upon his bed in a high fever.

"O papa!" he exclaimed, throwing his arms around my neck, "I shall fail, I know I shall. I shall have to stay home and shan't be ready for the examination. Can't I go back to school?"

"Curse the school!" I muttered inwardly as I saw my suffering child and heard his piteous tones. For what were the whole institution worth to me, if it slew my child?

"There, my darling," said I, "don't think any more about the school or its lessons. You are ill now and can't go back. You must keep still and try to get well as soon as possible, then we will think about it."

"I will be still, papa," he replied, as he imprinted a hot kiss upon my cheek and then lay quiet with closed eyes; but by the movement of his lips, I *could* see that his mind was still upon his lessons,

while the burning fever was mounting higher in his throbbing pulse and beating temples.

I hastily sent for Dr. Draco, who, after a brief examination, pronounced the boy in danger of brain fever, and ordered absolute quiet and the best of care. The latter, we assured him, should be given, but the former was difficult to be secured, while the boy's mind was in its morbid and anxious state. Then I told the doctor of the exciting cause of Willie's illness. He heard me through with evident impatience, and then earnestly exclaimed :

"Another result of this school-cramming and competition, which is slaughtering our innocents. This stress and strain affect most the very children who do not need it—those of nervous, sanguine temperament, who are already over-stimulated, while those of the opposite temperament are only discouraged and depressed thereby.

"It seems to me, as Dr. Richardson says, there are as distinctly two grand divisions of mental aptitudes, as there are two grand divisions of sex, and any attempt to convert one into the other is a certain failure. Your two boys here, Willie and Bob, may be taken as examples of the two classes, which I distinguish as the synthetic and analytic. Those

of the first class are like Willie, whose minds are ever open to impressions from outer natural phenomena, who have quick, original ideas, and even, it may be, poetic sentiment, but who cannot grasp the analytical and detailed departments of learning at all; while to the other class mathematical problems and all that may be called analytical are as easy as play."

"I know that to be true," I remarked, "for while Willie is enthusiastically interested in natural objects, and has made quite a fine collection of insects, he cannot master the details of arithmetic; but Bob, to whom grammar is a *bete noir*, and the memorizing of terms an impossibility, has no difficulty with mathematical problems, provided he is allowed to work them out in his own way. But he can't do any thing by rule. Hence he is set down as a dunce at school; but, you see, it does not disturb him."

"You are wise," said the doctor, "to recognize these differences, for most teachers look upon all children as alike, and expect all to be turned out of the same brand. The moral I draw from these outlines of natural fact is, that in teaching, it is injury of mind and thereby of body, to try to force analytical minds into synthetical grooves, or the reverse.

"The more I see of school labor, the more certain do I become that the strain commonly put upon youthful minds is altogether opposed to health. A great deal of nonsense has been written about the overwork of mature brains, but there is extreme peril of overwork to growing children and youths with immature brains. The competitive system, as applied to youth, has produced a most ruinous effect upon the mental constitution. School work should be exclusively directed to development. A great blunder is committed when one of the organs of the body is worked at the expense of the other parts of the organism.

"To secure health, through education, it is requisite that a more systematic and scientific study of the psychology of the subject should be undertaken, and that the class studies should be divided in regard to the mental aptitudes of the scholar. All extreme competitive strains should be avoided; they defeat their own object, and produce mental as well as physical degeneration. Very quick and precocious children should be directed rather than forced, while dull and feeble children should receive the chief care of the teacher.

"The traditional and almost universal dislike of

school," continued the doctor, "ought long before this, to have shown mankind that their educational methods were all wrong; for, as Hobbes says, 'the strongest of all pleasures are those arising from the gratification of curiosity.' This emotion is especially active in the young, as if to point out the way of education by arousing and satisfying it. However much our modern methods may have been improved in organization, I am satisfied that they have retrograded, in fact, while they thus destroy the health and happiness of the children. I trust your child will escape their baneful effects. Instruction is dearly purchased at the loss of what we hold most dear in life."

To which I answered with a heartfelt expression of hope and determination, that if Willie should escape, my children should never be subjected to them again.

"'Glamis hath murdered sleep,' competition is murdering our children," answered he. "There is too much mental crowding, and too little liberty for growing bodies."

"Do not the teachers see and try to avoid these evils?" I inquired.

"Our best teachers deplore this," he replied, "but

they are unable to remedy it. The authorities dictate to the teachers, and they, in turn, dictate to the children. Said one of them recently, 'I know that my position depends upon the marks that the examiners give me. The teachers are not allowed to educate rationally. They are compelled to drive and 'nag' the poor scholars, that they may not fail on examination day. The galling yoke is felt by teacher and scholar alike, and under it both move uneasily. By it many a noble teacher has been discouraged and many a class has been demoralized.'"

"I have seen," I added, "that two principals of city schools have been recently convicted of purloining examination papers in advance for the use of their pupils."

"It is the logical outcome of the system," answered the doctor. "If the teacher's work is to drill and cram for examinations, why not have the questions in advance and make thorough work of it? We shall never have good schools," he concluded, "until we have a system radically different from the present."

CHAPTER XVI.

RETRIBUTION AND RECONCILIATION.

MISS MILLER, in the revulsion of her feelings, caused by Bob's innocent words, believing that Ag. in his return to her was actuated, at least in part, by a sense of duty, had shrunk from receiving such sacrifice, and determined to relinquish his hand. Feeling herself unable, in his presence, to pursue the path so clearly marked out in her mind, and to control the dictates of her heart, which still clung to him, she had sought safety in flight. It had been a great effort to again abandon the hope of her life, and the bright gleam of joy which had again shone across her pathway, but the very depth and purity of her love had driven her from him, and what seemed a dreadful future. In a distant city, she had recourse to her chosen vocation, and by the aid of friends had found more congenial employment in the kindergarten. Here she had sought solace for her sorrow in the best antidote given to mortals—earnest and

useful occupation. Yet in her hours of solitude, in her sleeping and waking moments, and even in the midst of her duties, was ever present to her heart the vision of departed love and happiness, leaving an ever-vacant chamber in the halls of memory and hope. She had begun to subdue her feelings when they were again stirred to their depths by Ag.'s visit. He was determined to find her, and know the cause of her desertion, and win her again if possible. But though successful in his first object, he utterly failed to shake her resolution or learn its cause; for it was based equally upon her regard for him and his happiness, and such as she could not tell him, though she did not deny her continued love. She was too truthful, and it was also in vain for her to do so in the presence of his strong declarations and impassioned appeals. Though summoning all her resolution, she was overcome with pain and grief when he, in the agony of a strong man beating the air, imprisoned by unseen circumstances, clasped her in his arms, and pressing her to his breast declared that he would not give her up. With tearful eye and breaking heart she gently released herself from his grasp, and crying "I love you, I love you too well," she fled almost fainting from the room. Ag.

stood like one in a dream, confronted by a dread intangible phantom which he could not see, yet which was crushing and killing him. She had told him of her interview with Count Muzio, who had followed her, having heard of her return to her native city, to again press his suit. This had been in vain, though she knew nothing of his real character. But Ag., now blinded by his pain and disappointment, flew to the conclusion that he had been in some way the cause of his rejection, and at least had poisoned her mind against him in a way which she could not explain. The very mystery and uncertainty of his conjectures only added keenness to his grief and strength to his desperation. Failing to win her, or even to learn the cause of her resolution, he determined to follow the Italian and demand explanation of his words and influence with Miss Miller. In this disturbed state of mind, he learned of Teazel's departure in company with the very object of his search, which added a torch to the magazine of his emotions.

Miss Miller had been scarcely able to compose her mind again to the calm level of her duties in the school after her interview with Ag. and with me, when she was thrown into a greater agitation

by the receipt of Ag.'s message, telling her of Teazel and the music teacher. Almost too shocked to think, but one impulse took possession of her, to save Teazel. She could not believe, would not believe evil of her young friend,—a simple child to her as to us,—but she knew her danger and determined to try to rescue her. She knew somewhat of the Count's movements and acquaintance in this country, and soon formed her resolution. She hastily dismissed her pupils, saying that she could not tell them when she again would see them, and closed her school. She then took the first train for the East, almost surprised when she found herself seated in the car, and borne with rapid speed, whither she knew not and cared not, only to find her dear young friend, and escape from the throbbings and yearnings of her own unsatisfied heart.

Ag., when left at the station where Teazel had been found, stood watching the departing train, silent and bewildered, hardly able to realize the events of the past few hours. He had seen my daughter with me, in her usual gay and innocent loquacity, apparently unconscious of the precipice on which she stood. He had heard my brief cautions to say nothing to Teazel, without explanation,

except that the music teacher had disappeared. Then we had gone as suddenly, and he was left as one just awakened from disquiet dreams.

"All must be well with her," he muttered; "but the Italian, where is he? He cannot be far away, and my object is still unaccomplished."

Awakened by these thoughts of his rival and his villany, he started up with renewed determination to find him and be avenged, though no definite plans had been matured in his mind.

"He must be in the place," he said, as he hastened away, "and I will find him. The town is small."

But after walking about the principal streets for an hour, hoping yet fearing to meet his enemy, he learned that another railroad entered the place on the other side of the town, and that the Italian had been seen going in that direction. Hastening to the station, he there learned that the man had gone upon the train which left an hour previous, and that there would not be another train for two hours. This filled the cup of Ag.'s disappointment. An eager, angry man can work, run, fight, but to wait is torture. Ag., thus eluded at every step and compelled at last to wait and wander about the stupid

streets of that dull town, for two full hours, while every moment was bearing his object farther from his sight, found it almost more than he could endure. He walked about and chafed like a lion in his cage, counting and cursing the laggard moments, and his luck:—Yet it was not luck, the fable of fools, nor a cursed chance, as it proved, but the wise Providence that rules in human affairs, which he afterward had cause to bless to the end of his days.

At length the tardy moments passed, and he was again on the cars following an unseen object, not knowing where to go, or why he went, or what he should do in case of success, or the contrary. But he was compelled to do something, go somewhere; yet however fast he sped, another was in advance, the mysterious fate which often interferes in the “best-laid plans of mice and men.” As he rode along on the rushing train, he fell into a reverie over his lost past and hopeless present. He reviewed, in memory, the halcyon days of his first love under the azure skies, in the enchanted atmosphere, of Italy; and the rude awakening from his dream, the long separation, the chance meeting, and the accident at the hospital fair, the glad recognition, and days of joy in the delight of renewed love and

hope ; the sudden, inexplicable parting again, and the hopeless misery of his present situation ; while his thoughts went forward to the blank, dark future, which could show nothing but an undefined desire for revenge and punishment upon his base rival, then a long dreary waste of years without hope and without love.

His reverie was interrupted by the sudden stopping of the train. Shouts and screams broke on his ear, and the fiendish hiss of escaping steam. As he stepped from the car to learn the cause, a sudden glare of flame shot up a short distance in front of them, in the light of which he could see men running to and fro, and the dismantled and dreadful ruin of a wrecked train. The huge locomotive was lying on its side throbbing like a wounded monster, with broken joints and shattered sides, beneath which lay the crushed and cindered forms of its attendants. As Ag. approached, he saw that the preceding train had been thrown from the track, and that the two rear cars were crushed together, and had taken fire. Fully aroused, in the presence of danger, he rushed forward to assist the wounded, whose bodies he could see projecting from the windows and tops of the broken cars, where they were

imprisoned and begging for help to rescue them from the fast-approaching flames. He threw himself into the work of relief with all the energy which had been concentrated upon his own wrongs, and succeeded in saving and assisting many of the unfortunate beings thus suddenly brought to face a most appalling death. Gradually the cries of the imprisoned and injured who could not be rescued were hushed in the devouring flames, and nothing was heard but the groans of the survivors, who were transferred to the other train, and the anxious queries and sobs of those who had lost friends or loved ones. Meantime, another train had come up from the opposite direction, and its occupants had joined the other passengers in their labors.

Ag. had forgotten himself and his object, in his care for others, and was returning nearly exhausted to his car, when he perceived, lying upon a cushion by the roadside, the pallid features and dark dishevelled hair of one, apparently in the last moments of life, and bending over him, trying to comfort and revive him, was a female form which he could but recognize as that of his lost love, Miss Miller.

"My God!" he could only gasp; "Diana! you here? Unhurt? And who is this?"

"Mr. King—dear Ag.—are you injured? There is blood on your breast. Oh! tell me, are you safe?" and anxious tears stood in her deep, loving eyes.

"Yes, I am safe, Miss Miller,—but you,—and this man? How came you here; and with him?"

"Hush! he is dying," she whispered, as she gently raised his drooping head, and strove to strengthen him. "It is Muzio. I found him here. He does not know us. But see! he revives." As she spoke, the injured man opened his eyes, with a lost and vacant gaze, until they rested upon the face of Miss Miller. Then, with a faint smile of recognition, they closed again. He gently clasped her hand which held his, and murmured: "I have seen' her again, now let me die."

"Fate has been before me," muttered Ag.

"'I will repay, saith the Lord,'" solemnly replied Diana.

Again the dying man's eyes opened with the last gleam of consciousness. Diana bent close to him and whispered: "I know all. Tell me, where is Isabel Laurence, your pupil, my friend?"

He fixed his eyes upon her for a moment of the most utter self-abasement in the presence of purity, *and the vision of his life confronted now by death;*

then a light of hope appeared, and he replied : "She, thank God, is safe, with her father, pure and innocent as I found her ;—but that man,—who is he ?" he asked, striving to rouse himself, and gazing eagerly upon Ag.'s stern, but now softened features.

"The man you wronged once in separating me from my love, twice in defaming me to her, thrice in trying to betray my niece," slowly responded Ag. "But I forgive you now," he added, in pity for the dying man. "I will try to forgive you," as his eye fell on Diana, and he felt that he was still separated from her he loved by more than time and seas.

"Guilty, wretched creature that I am," replied the Italian, turning away his face, "but not of the second charge," he added.

Ag. looked at Diana, and she answered :

"No, Ag., believe me, he has not mentioned you ; he did not know you were in the country—but look !"

She turned to the dying man, whose head suddenly became heavy on her arm, while she grew faint in the awful presence of death.

"Let me take him ; I forgive him," whispered Ag., as he gently removed her arm and laid the dead upon the earth, and spread his handkerchief over the pale features. Then he turned to his com-

panion. She slowly rose, her eyes fixed on him with a look of untold tenderness, reached out her hands as if groping for support, and fell upon his breast. With a strong convulsive clasp he folded her to his heart, glad for the partial unconsciousness that gave her to him even for a moment. Tenderly he bore her to the nearest car, placed her in a seat, and drew her head upon his breast, not hastening to bring the moment of restoration, which he felt would remove that dear form forever.

"My love, my true, my only love, now you are mine, mine!" he murmured, while his passionate kisses and strong embrace testified to the sincerity of his words.

Slowly she awoke, as in a blissful dream, to partial consciousness; but she did not move. She heard his words, felt his strong embrace, and wished to know no more in that one perfect moment. But while she listened to his words of love and constancy, a new, strong hope was born in her heart, and she almost breathlessly whispered:

"Ag., do you love me yet, as of old?"

"Yet, ever, forever, my own and only love," he answered, as he folded her more closely to his heart.

"Where are we? Where are we going?" at length *she said.*

"We are together," he answered. "I care not where we go."

"Let us go on forever," was all her answer.

It was not till many months later that the cause of their estrangement was discovered in Bob's unfortunate words.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE IDEAL SCHOOL.

"**E**UREKA! I have found it!" was the somewhat abrupt exclamation with which I was greeted upon my meeting my old friend Damon, whom I had not seen for several months.

"Found what?" I asked, not sharing the enthusiasm which my friend felt in his discovery.

"I have found the desire of the ages, the dream of to-day," he replied; "the ideal school."

"In your mind, I suppose," said I, "where it is likely to remain; for if men should see it in reality, they would not approve of it. 'The light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not.' Where is your school?"

"It is not mine, nor my idea," he replied, "but that of a young man who has had the capacity to conceive and the courage to carry out the ideas of true education. The results are wonderful. My boys, who have been there only a few weeks, are delighted and enthusiastic. They are transformed; I hardly know them."

"What are they most like?" I asked. "Can they parse like parrots, and 'do sums' like an adding machine?"

"No, indeed," he replied. "They are neither parrots nor machines, but simply genuine, healthy, happy boys, growing like plants in the sunshine, guided and aided by one who understands and reveres their natures and the laws of God. But I can't describe it. You must come and see. It is not far from the city, in a beautiful village near my brother's farm, where I sent my boys after taking them from school. Will you come?"

"I consented to go with him, but with little of his enthusiasm, for what I had seen and heard of our schools during the past few months had well-nigh driven me to utter despair, and extinguished all hope of seeing a better state of things. So, one fine morning, behold us, two staid and earnest business men, leaving our urgent affairs and going out in search of an idea relating merely to the education of children. But they were *our* children, to whom and for whom are directed and carried on all the great activities of the world; who are the coming men and women, soon to become the world itself, when we have left it forever. Forget it as much as we

may, the fact remains that the world of life revolves about the children—the embodied future in which we look to see accomplished the unfulfilled ambitions of our lives, the great reforms and improvements for which we labor and look, and die without the sight. He who has thus impressed himself upon the future, through the young, is alone sure of immortality. Thus Socrates is a strong and vital force in the world to-day, while the kingdom of Alexander crumbled as quickly as it was raised, and nothing but his name remains.

“Who is this young man of whom you speak?” I asked of Mr. Damon, as we travelled together.

“I know only,” he replied, “that he is a friend of children—a born teacher. After leaving college he taught school, as others have done, to learn the knowledge of the art, but, as he says, the more his mind expanded by the comprehension of the true principles of teaching, and his soul yearned for the work, the more he felt restrained and crushed in by the iron systems and false methods in which he was forced to labor, until, out of very love for the children and loyalty to his calling, he felt obliged to abandon the schools. He retired to the country to devote himself to liter-

ary pursuits. While there he became acquainted with my boys, and a strong attachment sprang up between them. He accompanied them in their sports and rambles in the fields, and by his questions and interest in the objects about them, quickly aroused a like interest in them, which he stimulated and gratified, just enough to keep them always eager for more knowledge. This he never supplied when they were able to find it for themselves. In the same manner he aroused their interest in reading, and in the events of the day, which were always made the topic of further questions and discussions. He invented and employed games and sports in which they were taught arithmetic, grammar, history, geography, geometry, and other abstract subjects without knowing it. Gradually the boys spread the news of their discovery, and other boys in the neighborhood wished to join them. He consented, on the condition that they should all be congenial and moral, and that half of the day only should be spent with him, the other half in their own diversions, with the proviso that each, when they met, should bring some new fact, or specimen, or article of truth, which he had found or made or learned by his own efforts. Thus about a dozen

boys were soon collected, it being entirely voluntary on their part, and they being allowed to remain only as long as they retained the good-will of their friend—teacher they did not call him,—for they did not know that they were in school, and that their parents were paying him for his assistance.”

By this time I was eager to see this strange place. “An ideal school, indeed,” I remarked.

“Here it is,” said Mr. Damon, as we drove up to a large, low, old-fashioned house, back from the street, surrounded by a large lawn, and overhung by the trailing branches of the elm and the large-leaved maple.

“School is in session, I see,” said Mr. Damon, as we entered and saw a group of eager boys, apparently at play in some game on the ground.

“I see no teacher,” said I.

“He is within, I presume,” he replied; “but you must not let the boys hear that word. Let us approach and see what they are doing.”

As we came up, Mr. Damon’s boys ran up to us with a hearty welcome, but soon excused themselves, as they wished to rejoin the games, they said.

‘What game?’ he asked.

“Don’t you see?” one replied, “we are making

New York State. One lays it out with a compass and tape measure ; another digs up a bank for the boundary, and scoops out the lakes and bays ; another marks out the rivers with pieces of twine ; and another the railroads and canals with strips of paper ; others locate the cities by stakes with pieces of paper showing their names and sizes, and I am building the mountains with stones and dirt. There ! some one has stepped on Mt. Marcy, and I must go and repair it," and off he went with all the eagerness of a boy building mud-dams.

"When we have finished the State," continued the other, "we shall have an election, and choose a governor and legislature ; then we shall meet and have discussions and pass bills, and the governor will veto them—won't it be fun ? Then each member will select some part of the State for his residence and see who can find out the most about his locality : He will represent its geological features and minerals by placing a specimen there, as of the Trenton limestone or Potsdam sandstone ; learn the number of the people and their chief occupation, and all he can about its history, leading events, and characters ; each trying to show that his district is the most important, or has been distinguished by

some great event, or natural scenery, or something. I represent Cooperstown and the scenes of Cooper's novels; and my brother, Ticonderoga and the battles in that region. He says the battle of Saratoga was the most important of the Revolution, but I think Leatherstocking was a greater man than General Gates, don't you?"

This appeal I was unable to answer, for I was astonished and bewildered by what I saw and heard.

"Where is your teacher?" I asked, while Mr. Damon trod on my foot, and scowled at my inadvertence.

"We don't have any teacher. This is n't a school," was the reply. "Mr. Newman is our umpire, like what we have in base ball, you know. We call him the judge. When we can't find out any thing, we ask him, but he hardly ever tells us. He says 'look in that book,' or 'try it for yourself.' The other day I tried to make some hydrogen gas for a balloon, and the bottle blew up and threw the acid all over my clothes. See the little holes it made. It burns, I can tell you. One boy—he lives in the city, or he would know—asked how many pecks in a bushel. There is a peck measure, and a bushel, and a heap of sand," said Mr. Newman, pointing to

them, 'try it and see'; and he tried it while we all laughed. I guess he'll know that when he goes home. That is the way we learn all the weights and measures—and every thing. 'We learn to do a thing, by doing it,' as Mr. Newman says. I learned how to fall into the pond, the other day, by falling in; but I learned at the same time how to swim. That is the way, he says, to learn every thing; by being pushed in, as the little birds are pushed out of their nests to learn to fly. You can't learn to swim without going into the water."

During this talk, the boys were busy as beavers at their State-making, with animated and busy tongues, but without disorder; the others scarcely noticing our presence, while we looked and learned and wondered. Suddenly the sound of a drum was heard and a boy appeared, beating a lively march. Instantly the work was dropped and all fell in behind the leader, in order of size, executed a rapid march about the grounds, and entered the house. We followed them; and while they went to prepare for the next exercise, we called on the leader whose unseen influence had wrought these transformations. We found him in his study, an earnest, thoughtful young man, who rose to greet us with a *most cordial* and cheerful manner.

"We called to see your—'school' would hardly be the proper name, I suppose?" said I.

"No, it is not a school, according to the traditional idea," he said pleasantly. "It is like the German Gymnasia, and the Greek Academy, and the School of Socrates in the streets, but not any one of them; rather all combined. It is more strictly, a nursery or seminary for the growth of seedlings; but we rejected the latter name, when we heard that a man from the country had recently been in town inquiring for the cemetery—the seminary he meant—in the other part of the village. This, certainly, is not a place for dead bodies—not even for dead languages. But we do not care much for names. We are concerned only for things, facts, whether objects or ideas. Would you like to see our building?"

"With pleasure. Every thing here interests us. We are but older boys. How is it you so interest and manage them?"

"By simply being a boy myself. I know what pleases and arouses them by looking into my own mind and memory. Education is drawing out, but the writing in the child's soul is in sympathetic ink, and it requires *sympathy* to awaken it into life. Thus I try to guide them, with the least possible appear-

ance of it, by following no precedents, but only the known laws of the mind and the facts of human nature as indicated in them. They teach me how to guide them. I am the student here. They are the books which I constantly peruse, though they are not aware of it.

“Another rule by which I am guided—I have none for them—is never to tell them any thing which they can learn for themselves. Would you like to see what they have done? Here is our museum, entirely of their own collection, except a few specimens which I brought from distant lands. These were gathered in their walks and rambles in the neighboring fields and waters. This is the laboratory, provided, as you see, with only a simple apparatus and chemicals, where they make their own experiments, under just sufficient supervision and regulation to prevent their injuring themselves. Here is the workshop, where certain ones can come on certain days and learn the use of tools, and especially of those most efficient tools, their own hands and arms. These brackets were made by them, these sketches were drawn and framed by them. That is a miniature steam-engine—no wonder you admire it—made by the son of a wealthy importer, who

never suspected particular talent in his son. I see you are looking at those wires overhead. They are for a telephone which the boys have put up and use between different parts of the building. We intend to have a fair next month and exhibit and sell what the boys have made and collected. They are eagerly preparing for it now."

"Where is the school-room?"

"These are all school-rooms; so is that which you saw as you entered; so are the fields and streams, the streets and shops, the sea and skies,—all that awakens and educates us; but here is another. The boys have gathered. Let us go in."

As we entered I saw what seemed to be a parlor or library. The floor was carpeted. Comfortable chairs and sofas, with a few tables, were scattered about; the walls were adorned with a few fine paintings and many engravings, portraits of distinguished authors, artists, and men of mark in all walks of life; on two sides were ample book-cases, well filled with books, mainly of reference on all subjects, while in the centre, on small tripods, were a large Bible, dictionary, and atlas—"the household altars," said Mr. Newman, "on which we sacrifice ignorance and impiety. They ought to be in every home where

there are children." The boys were earnestly engaged in an informal discussion when we entered, on some point in history, and appealed to the leader for a decision, but he answered, "I appoint you and you a committee, with full powers, to send for persons and papers, to find out and report at the next meeting. You may consult such and such books."

"This is a meeting of our reading club, I believe. The leader will please proceed."

Thereupon a boy who had been previously appointed to select and read something of interest, arose and read clearly and distinctly, but without any attempt at oratorical display, a selection from the daily paper.

During the reading, several questions arose as to the pronunciation and meaning of certain words, which were speedily settled by reference to the dictionary. The subject was in reference to the proposed Panama canals and ship railway, which were earnestly discussed by the aid of the atlas and books of reference, as to the origin of the schemes, their comparative merits, the Fillibusters, Nicaragua and its history back to the days of Balboa, in which we were all much interested, when the next reader claimed the floor. His selection, according to the

plan which I afterward learned, was taken from the current literature of the day, and was a chapter from the "Fool's Errand," in which there was ample field for discussion in the questions leading back to the great events of the war. This was followed by a reading from the English classics, a selection from one of Scott's poems, which, with discussion in English history and literature, ended the reading exercise, several "committees" having been appointed in the meantime to look up disputed points.

"If you will allow me to ask a question," said I to Mr. Newman, as the reading club adjourned to the ball ground, "I would like to ask how you teach, or, rather, how the boys learn spelling and grammar."

"Now you have hit the twin hobgoblins of teachers," said he. "In the first place, I don't teach them. I don't teach anything. All education is self-education, as the child learns numbers from its fingers and toes—the arithmetical digits; form from its balls and rattles, and language by speaking and hearing.

"They learn spelling by reading, as you do and I do. Who ever heard of any one's learning to spell

by conning long columns of meaningless words? Occasionally, for a change, we have spelling-matches—not oral, but written—as a test and to keep things lively. If by grammar you mean the ‘art of speaking and writing the English language correctly,’ I answer; they learn it by speaking and writing it. They never hear or see it incorrectly employed. . . We have numerous exercises in letter-writing and descriptive writing; compositions, not on abstract themes, but by writing in their own language what they remember and understand of a selection read, or an account of a game or ramble or fishing excursion. But if you mean by grammar, what it is, the science of the language, then few of the ~~various~~ grammars teach it, and none of those ~~not in vogue~~. It is not a proper school study, but belongs to an advanced course of philology.”

“I see now,” said I, “how your boys learn geography, history, mineralogy, ~~botany, chemistry, etc.~~ language, literature, and, best of all, to think, to converse, to speak, and to reason. But the most important branch I have not seen. That is arithmetic, and I should say the most difficult one to make interesting or attractive.”

“Arithmetic,” said Mr. Newman, “~~belongs to~~”

what Comte calls *instrumental* knowledge, not *positive* knowledge. With reading and writing it is only an instrument by which to acquire *real* knowledge. They are the keys of knowledge, but not knowledge itself: so are all languages. The scholar who should spend all his time studying languages, would be like an architect who should spend his whole life in learning to draw. He would not build any thing. You do not read in order to pronounce the words; you do not think of them, but of the ideas conveyed. They are but vehicles; what do we care for them if they carry nothing? How would you like to read your morning paper, which at evening is as old as the *Antediluvian Chronicle*, every day in the year? But that is what the poor children in the schools are compelled to do. We should have periodical school-readers. Now, as to arithmetic, I agree with you that it is a necessary instrument, and a difficult one to master—as presented in the books. But it is only because it is presented, as all the subjects in the text-books are, wrong end first—the abstract principle, then the application; the formula, then the fact. There is but one principle in arithmetic, that of simple numbers and their addition and subtraction. This every child learns

or should learn from concrete objects, blocks, pictures, cards, etc. The use of figures—those queer Arabic characters—and the decimal notation is an art to be learned, like writing. The command of this instrument is acquired, like that of the hammer in the shop, by using it; and a most valuable one it is; like the hammer in the arts—both derived from the human hand. Now you shall see how my boys use arithmetic.”

Thereupon, the boys having come in, tired from their game of ball, and discussing what game to play next, Mr. Newman suggested that we would like to see one of their arithmetical games.

“Agreed! Just the thing!” they exclaimed. “Let us play the grocery,” proposed one, which was accepted.

Mr. Newman went to a desk, which I had not before noticed, labelled “Grocery,” opened it, and appointed the proposer of the game to open the store. He opened several drawers, placed some scales and measures on the table, and announced himself ready for business. “Business” immediately began in the most energetic manner. The boys rushed up and called for the articles usually comprised in a city grocery, exercising their utmost ingenuity to call

for the most unusual articles. These were immediately handed out on cards, on which were written the quantity and price of the goods, which each was to reckon up for himself and return, before he could purchase any thing more. If any one called for an article not in the store, he was fined. One made much amusement by calling for a pound of gingham—he said he meant ginger. The grocer was allowed a fair profit on his goods, but if he made mistakes in his charges, they were deducted from his profits. One boy objected to paying ten cents a pound for salt, while another was charged only two cents a pound for sugar. After the cards were all collected, they were given out again to different ones, each trying to find an error in the other's work. Every error of every kind was fully discussed and recorded against the one who made it. Then the one who had made the least errors and obtained the most articles, thus showing rapidity as well as accuracy in calculation, was declared the winner.

“That is good for elementary operations,” said I, while the boys were resting from their efforts. “But how do you manage fractions? I believe they cause pupils and teachers more difficulty than all the rest of arithmetic—perhaps I may say, of mathematics.”

"Yes," replied Mr. Newman with a pleasant twinkle in his eye, "fractions are an original evil. If Eve had eaten the whole apple and not divided with her spouse, perhaps we might have avoided the necessity for them, by having the whole of things. Like all evils, they are to be avoided if possible. I cannot see any benefit to be obtained by forcing young children to wrestle with all the transformations and somersaults of these iniquitous and most vulgar fractions. When I see a class of pupils marched up, like the noble six hundred, to assault the serried lines and masked batteries of a column of fractions, I am sure 'some one has blundered.'

"Fortunately we have a most efficient and patriotic recourse—our decimal currency. The Englishman may march up to the blazing batteries, but the American knows better. He turns the flank. Every pupil knows the fractional parts of a dollar in cents, and thus can circumvent common fractions by decimals. Then he has the key to all the applications of percentage, which in the books are most illogically divided into commission, banking, etc., while there is but one principle in all. I will show you our way of treating fractions. Who wishes to play teacher?" he said to the boys.

One instantly rose and was immediately assailed with a shower of questions on fractions, which were answered with, to me, wonderful readiness. Whenever a disputed question arose, he stepped to the blackboard, and by reducing to decimals, quickly demonstrated his point. When he failed, another took his place. Thus were conducted all the operations of arithmetic, as in every thing else, the pupils teaching themselves and each other. I was particularly interested in the workings of the bank. So were the boys. The banker, especially, seemed to feel the dignity that doth hedge a cashier, or a ticket-agent: penned off from his fellow-men, and looking through a window like a convict. The boys brought their notes, checks, and currency to the bank, which, like some other similar institutions, was quite imposing without, while its sole assets within were a table and a blank book.

They computed interest and discount, and kept their books in regular form, which they had to "balance" at the close of operations. Thus they conducted all the ordinary branches of commerce, shipping their goods, represented by cards and packages, in all due form, to different parts of the building, representing different countries and cities.

They also measured the floors and walls for carpets and paper, made measurements of irregular forms, and solved problems in geometry, while some of the older ones undertook to survey the fields with chain and compass.

"I am satisfied," said I to Mr. Newman, as the boys filed out again with another march to hold a session of the "Legislature" under the trees—to which they invited us. "But do you not lose sight of some of the disciplinary effects of these studies, in this way?"

"We do not lose sight of it, for we do not have it in view," replied he; "but we get the discipline. We do not eat in order to grow, with a weighing of our food and testing of our strength after every meal. We eat because we are hungry; but we grow strong thereby. The teacher may select and direct, according to the principles of education as shown in the growing minds before him. But any attempt at mental discipline directly, defeats itself by producing immediately mental indigestion. As the limbs of the child grow strong by use, so the acquiring of knowledge for its own sake gives mental discipline, when wisely directed."

"I believe in these principles," said I, "for I see

by their application here that they are in accordance with the teachings of common-sense and experience, and the children enjoy it. They are but men in miniature, and when treated as such, making their education a part of their actual life, they are equally interested and happy."

"It is not of so much importance what you study," continued Mr. Newman, "as how you study. As Emerson says: 'It matters little what you study, but every thing, with whom you study.' Charles Kingsley says: 'The question is not what to teach, but how to educate; how to train, not scholars but men, bold, energetic, liberal-minded, magnanimous men. If I can succeed in doing that, I shall do what no salary can repay.' Education is the art of life."

"But where would you begin this system of education, and where would you end it?" I asked.

"It begins," he replied seriously, "with the parents—and ends in heaven. It was introduced and practised by the Great Teacher,—teaching men as little children by parable and illustration, leading them through things seen to the invisible. Its law is love and its gospel liberty."

"Do you believe in preparing boys for college, or

for business?" I asked, remembering my own former doubts upon that point.

"I am not preparing them for either," he replied; "I am trying to prepare them to be men, to live the active, useful life of this world—not an imaginary one. This preparing for college is the great incubus which hangs over all attempts at natural education. As Mallock says, 'the deadliest form of ignorance is the fetish worship of useless knowledge.'"

"But can this natural education that you speak of, be carried out in our elementary and common schools with their large number of pupils?" I asked.

"In certain heathen edifices," he said, in reply, "it was the custom to build up the solid wall around a living child, entombed in stone. In our educational system, the child is entombed in books. Not until these walls are broken down, and the child set free to behold and enjoy the pure air and sunshine of heaven and the world about him, can true and natural education be begun. The old methods are fundamentally false. They proceed in the wrong direction—against nature,—and the farther they go, the farther they are from the truth. The reform must first be a revolution. It must overthrow, be-

fore it can up-build ; it must uproot the false in order to implant the true. This system is thus humorously described by C. F. Adams, Jr.

“ In the first place, time out of mind, all knowledge was, educationally speaking, looked upon as a vast accumulation of facts, rules, and definitions, and the grand aim and object of teaching was to impart as many as possible of these to the youthful mind. The way to impart was to cause them to be laboriously committed to memory. Thus the teacher sat in his chair, a sort of lone fisherman on the shore of the great ocean of things known, and he hooked up out of it now a rule, and now a fact, and then again a definition, and he gave them to the children, and saw that they swallowed them, whether they liked them or not, and whether they were nourished by them or not.

“ Under these circumstances, education being reduced to little more than a mechanical process of cramming, with periodical nerve trials to ascertain the degree of retention, the average child not unnaturally felt toward his school and what was there required of him very much as a learned dog or monkey may be supposed to feel toward his taskmaster. Accordingly, the sickening dislike of

school, and of things taught at school, is, with the majority of those emancipated from it, almost the strongest association connected with early life.'

"Others like F. W. Parker, founder of 'the Quincy method,' have struck sturdy blows at these old walls, which are beginning to totter and let in the light, here and there, and which shall in their fall set free millions of happy children. He has put these principles into practice with wonderful results. He and such as he are the master-builders of the present day, through whose labors the coming generation shall pass over into broader, better, brighter, and pleasanter ways of living and learning."

"Can these ideas be applied to our public schools?" I asked.

"Lowell says," he replied, "'that we are the most common-schooled and least cultivated people in the world.' What the schools want is teachers. The remedy is twofold: Professional teachers and skilled supervision. The normal schools must supply the one, the colleges the other. Teaching must be made a profession, like law or medicine, which none can enter without technical training and rigid examination, not in the three R's, but in

the science and art of teaching. This must be supplemented by skilled supervision, which the colleges must supply and school Boards employ. Our school system arose out of a great necessity. Millions of children were to be taught and teachers were not to be had. Hence substitutes were employed. Anybody could teach a common school. But as bricks cannot make a college, so money cannot make schools. The day for makeshifts is past. If we are to have a school system worthy of the name we must have teachers. The teacher makes the school.

"The normal schools must make the teachers. Now they are but academies in disguise. They do not make teachers. The people look upon them and use them as high schools where their sons and daughters can get a good education at the expense of the State. They teach everything but the art of teaching. The taxpayers are awakening to the knowledge of their inefficiency, and if they do not come up to their duty in this matter they will cease to exist. Our schools, academies, and colleges must be united in aim and effort. Our mythical University of the State of New York and ornamental Board of Regents of the University may be made useful as the nucleus of

this union. Then may our school system be no longer known as 'the deplorable American system'; our Boards of education be no more a training school for budding politicians; and our schools, an asylum for untrained and inefficient men and women who have usurped a sacred function to the everlasting detriment of their priceless charges."

I asked no more questions of Mr. Newman. I came, I saw, and was convinced. I returned thoughtful and anxious to my troubled home.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PASSED.

AS I returned to my home at the end of my day with Mr. Damon, I was met at the door by my wife, with anxious looks and weeping eyes, as she clasped my hand and whispered :

“Willie is worse. The doctor has been here twice. The fever has been rising all the afternoon, and his mind is wandering. He calls for you and for Ag., and Diana and the angels, but the worst of all is to hear him talk about his lessons. Most of the time he seems to be in school, and is reciting, or studying, or mourning over his difficulties and fear of failure in his examinations. Oh, it is pitiful ! Why did we send him to that dreadful place ? “With these words her feelings overcame her, and she fell upon my breast. I was obliged to summon all my self-control to sustain and soothe her, while her words pierced my heart with grief.

“Let us hope for the best,” I could only say. “It

may be but a passing paroxysm of the fever, which will leave him soon in his right mind."

But my words sounded hollow in my own ears and could not cheer my own heart, for I remembered Willie's vision and his words, and began to realize as never before, how great must have been the long strain and torture of his mind, and the shock to his sensitive spirit, to have thus thrown him into the embrace of the fiery fever. Deep in my heart I lamented the day when I, in my blindness, submitted my tender child to that cruel ordeal. But now regrets were useless, and repinings vain.

"Let us go to his room," said I.

As we entered, we saw that the fever had subsided; the strange light had left his eyes, and his usual mildness and sweetness had returned, but with a weakness of body and divineness of expression that touched our hearts with unutterable tenderness.

"O, papa!" he softly said, as he threw his warm arms about my neck and drew my bearded face to his. "O, papa, I am so glad you've come! Now we are all here—mamma and baby and Bob and Tom, Teazel and Harry. I want you all to stay with me always, and not leave me again. I love you

so, I want to look at you and be with you all I can. Now tell me where you have been, and what you saw. All of you sit around and listen. Isn't this like heaven?" he murmured, as he closed his weary eyes, with one hand clasped in his mother's and the other in that of Bobby.

"You must be as quiet as you can, my child," I said, "for you are very weak and need all your strength in order to get well."

"I shall not be well again," he calmly whispered, "nor go to school again, but I want to hear all about it."

I endeavored to divert his thoughts from any thing pertaining to school, but found it best to tell him briefly of the delightful place I had visited.

"Oh! is it true, papa?" he asked, with sudden animation. "Is there such a place? It cannot be a school. How I would like to be there! It almost makes me wish to be well again. But there is a better school, up there, where I saw the happy children and the beautiful angel"; and the sweet, distant look again filled his eyes as he lay looking so far, far away.

"What fun!" exclaimed the impulsive Bob. "How I would like to play those games all day and

not study any more old books ! It 's just the place for me."

"I see the angel now," murmured Willie. "She is coming to me. It is Miss Diana. When will she come?"

"I will send for her," said I ; "she will come soon."

"And Uncle Ag., I want him too. Dear Uncle Ag., what made him go away? Was n't he surprised that night when the trunks tumbled down?" and a faint smile suffused his wan features.

"Will you send for him? Will he come?"

"I will try to find him," I answered. "I don't know when he will come."

"Oh, yes, he will come!" continued the boy. "He will come to see his little Willie, who will not ask him for stories any more. Now I want to sleep," and gently as a babe he floated away in dreamy slumber, still holding his mother's and his brother's hands.

I went out and telegraphed for Miss Miller to come immediately if she wished to see her favorite pupil again. I also sent in every direction for Ag., whom I knew would hasten to his bedside as soon as he should learn of Willie's illness. Days passed,

—days of such agony and suspense as only a fond parent can know when he stands by the side of a dying child. Oh, how trivial and transitory then appeared all my occupations, which had so greatly engrossed my time and thoughts! What are wealth or want, when those for whom alone we desire or fear them are lying at the brink of life, wanting nothing that we can give. All things put on a strange and altered look. The friends whom I met as of old seemed as strangers, so far were they from my heart and its burden. The beggars in the street I envied as they held out their withered palms, for they had no dying child at home; and the rich, as they rolled by, I looked on as a passing dream, so unreal seemed their show of happiness, contrasted with my ever-present sorrow.

Days passed, but day was as night, and night as day. I noted not the rising or the setting sun, rest or weariness. Out of that chamber of sickness, all was anxiety; within, all agony. Without, I wandered aimlessly seeking aid where help was not; struggling fitfully, but in vain, against the unseen, intangible evil which confronted us. Within his room my heart was wrung by his wild words and piteous appeals, which I was powerless to answer or

to grant. Neither Ag. nor Diana had come, though there had been ample time for them to do so. To Willie's oft-repeated inquiries for them, we could only answer: "Not yet. They will come soon"; while every day and hour was rapidly wearing away the frail tenement that held his noble spirit. But saddest of all, causing the keenest pangs, it was to see that sweet and gentle soul oppressed by delirium, disguised beneath the darkest mantle of approaching death; to hear his last, lingering breath employed in words weighted to us with deepest anguish and reproach. There were now but brief intervals of respite from the raging fever, mounting higher and higher in the burning brain to the citadel of the soul, which yet would not retire or abdicate its throne.

"O papa! will she come? When will my angel come?" he cried, with eager, agonizing appeal, clutching with his thin, pallid hand those that approached him. "Yes, I will wait for her, but I must learn my lessons now, or I shall fail and be marked down. The chief rivers of Siberia are the Lena, Obi, and Amazon. No. Reduce them to a common denominator and divide them by the capital of Paraguay. A noun is the name of a thing; but my

name is Alexander, King of Macedon. He conquered the world and wept—and wept,—why did he weep? Oh, I cannot do this sum! Give me a pencil, quick! I have it now. There! I can do it on my pillow, here. See, that is right. To find the greatest common divisor of two or more numbers—take an intransitive verb. Oh, I cannot learn this lesson! See the giant! There he stands, with his iron book. Don't let him beat me so. Won't you help your Willie?" cried the boy, as in his wild delirium he threw his hands about, beating his head and breast, while with tearful eyes and bleeding hearts, we heard his wandering words, knowing too well their fatal cause, and held his violent hands, once so gentle and so soft.

"When will my angel come, to save me from this fiend?" he cried. "'Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven, their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.' Did not Jesus say that when he set a little child in their midst? Is there not an angel watching over me? Are they not all ministering spirits? Yes, she will come, she will come to save me from the iron book. I shall fail, I know I shall. Is this examination day? Yes, I

shall pass. I shall pass. She will take me in her arms to the green fields where the happy children are."

His words grew fainter as his strength became exhausted, and gradually died away, while he sank into a dreamy stupor, murmuring inaudibly, and we sat by his side, silent, with aching hearts, watching the receding strife of coming death with fading life.

"She is coming," suddenly he spoke, arousing from his dreams with a bright, seraphic look. "She is coming."

Softly opened the door of his chamber, swiftly entered the sad, sweet face of his beloved teacher, and silently she kneeled by his bedside. With a sense of the sweetest satisfaction and security, he placed his hand in hers, as she kissed his hot lips and hastily brushed away her gathering tears.

"I am so glad you have come," he said; "I have dreamed of you, and waited long, so long. Now I am safe from the dreadful book. Now let us go to be with the angels and the happy children. But where is Uncle Ag.? Why did he not come with you? When will he come?"

Again the door opened, and appeared a tall, manly form, yet bowed with grief, and bent at the bedside

of the dying boy, by his weeping friend. Their hands were clasped, but not a word they spoke.

"Now we are all here ; all together " ; whispered the happy boy, while with the other hand in his mother's, he lay the living link that bound us all in one, joining earth to heaven. Then he spoke again. " Uncle Ag., will you marry Miss Diana ? You love her, don't you ? "

" With all my heart," was the deep, broken reply.

" Miss Diana, won't you marry Uncle Ag ? "

" We are married now, my dear," she said, as she lifted her sweet face to his, shining through her tears with love. He impressed a kiss upon her brow, but spoke no word.

" Now let us go," murmured the dying child. " Mamma, do not weep ; you will not miss me much. You will have Bob and baby and the rest, and I shall be happier there. Bobby, be a brave boy. Be good to mamma and the baby. Try to study what papa wants you to, and perhaps some day the good teacher will come, and you will be happy too. Dear Tom and Teazel, do not cry for me. I thought I should live to be large as you and fight great battles and do much good, but I see it is all right now. I am but a poor, weak boy,

that could never be but a burden to you all. Don't weep for me. I shall be strong and better there; I will watch and wait for you, and welcome you when you come. Dear, good papa, how much you have done for me; and I could only be your little lame Willie. I could not learn my lessons here, but I shall learn them there. The angels will lead us through the blissful fields, and we will learn forever from their lips of love. Come nearer, papa, kiss me. I cannot see you now. Let me clasp your hand. How dark it is! There, hold me tight. Now don't you see my angel? How beautiful she is! Now it is growing brighter. Nearer, —nearer—"

Fainter grew his words, lighter his grasp in mine, happier and holier the look upon his face.

"She—is—almost—here"; more faintly still:
"I—hear—the children—sing.—Good-by."

The light lips closed, the gentle hand relaxed in mine, and while with strong and agonizing grasp we clung to the feeble form, his pure and gentle spirit floated from us, forever free, to join its kindred in the skies.

The next morn the passer-by saw at our door the sable plume dropped from the death angel's pinion

as he passed ; but no one saw him as he bore the shining soul away. It was the messenger of life, bearing it to the school above.

THE END.



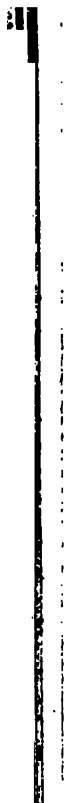


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